

Great Characters of Fiction.



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Great Characters of Fiction.



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EDITED BY
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Preamble.

IN such an age as the present, when the craving for novels and tales of all kinds is constantly on the increase, and apparently almost insatiable, it seems as if it may be useful to present the subject of fiction in a new and different light—as a profitable study rather than as a mere indulgence wherewith to while away an idle hour.

The love of fiction is rooted in the human soul : witness the child's eager petition, 'Tell me a story ;' witness the power of the minstrel bard, the improvisatore, the story-teller in all ages ; witness the romances, the legends, and the tales of folk-lore surviving in all countries ever since the childhood of the world ; witness the immortal power of such books as the *Pilgrim's Progress*, *Robinson Crusoe*, and the *Arabian Nights*, which hold their own from generation to generation. Stories—true or fictitious—always have been, and always will be, of universal interest, because they appeal to our humanity, to those deeper

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thoughts and emotions, common to us all, which go to make up the drama of human life ; and if they have been wrought with that ‘touch of nature which makes the whole world kin,’ they will live and speak and teach their lessons when other books have to rest silent on their shelves.

It is in vain to tell people not to read fiction—the young will read it because they are young, and on the look-out for amusement ; the old will read it because it makes them feel young again, because it brings back ‘the glory and the dream’ of former years, and makes their hearts thrill once more with the memories of love and sorrow ; the weary and the hard-worked will read it because it rests them, and diverts their minds from the worries of life by plunging them into the absorbing interests of a new and brighter world.

But it is not in vain so to cultivate the taste, the judgment, and the refinement of thoughtful readers, as that they will learn to ‘refuse the evil and choose the good’ in fiction as in other things ; not in vain to teach them to appreciate the beauty of style in such great masters of the art as Scott or Dickens or Thackeray, so that they may not care to read vulgar

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or ill-written books ; not in vain to show them how fiction may be used for noble ends—to stir the heart to such sacrifices as were made by an Esmond or a Jeanie Deans, or to rouse the world to take up the cause of the oppressed, as when *Uncle Tom's Cabin* went forth, from the pen of a woman, as the deliverer of the slave and at the same time preached the good news of the Gospel to many who could have been reached by no other means.

What we need to do is to cultivate the critical faculty, and induce those who have come to the age of discretion to study that which is best in fiction, as well as in other literature, so that they may not be able to tolerate the silly trash which so many of them are now devouring, and a taste for which too often leads on to that insidious poison which through the very cheapness and rapid spread of literature is now being introduced amongst us. At the same time, we would urge upon readers of any kind of fiction to study the excellent warning of Professor Ruskin as to what he quaintly calls ‘the sore temptation of novel-reading :’—

‘It is not the badness of a novel that we should dread, so much as its overwrought interest. The weakest romance

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is not so stupefying as the lower forms of religious exciting literature, and the worst romance is not so corrupting as false history, false philosophy, or false political essays. But the best romance becomes dangerous if, by its excitement, it renders the ordinary course of life uninteresting, and increases the morbid thirst for useless acquaintance with scenes in which we shall never be called upon to act.'

Our aim, then, in collecting this series of papers is to show the true uses of fiction by promoting a taste for the best and noblest kinds of it, and our plan has been to give, as it were, a portrait of the principal character presented in each standard novel or tale selected—a portrait painted with such careful and delicate touches as may cause it to stand out before our readers sufficiently to induce them to study the work for themselves, without telling enough of the story to spoil its interest if, perchance, they are not already acquainted with it.

And, in following out this plan, we strike another chord which generally finds a quick response in the popular mind—that of hero-worship. So strongly, indeed, is this worship ingrained in human hearts, that even the heroes of fiction come in for their share of it.

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As biography is to history in real life, so is the working out of a great character in a novel or poem to the novel or poem itself. What would our country be without the examples of great lives and noble deeds, handed down to be the possession and inheritance of her children yet unborn?

‘What is it makes a nation truly great?

Her sons; her sons alone; not theirs, but they.’

And surely our lives would also be the poorer if the great heroes and heroines of fiction could be swept away; if we could lose the silent friendship of *Henry Esmond* or *Colonel Newcome*, of *Romola* or *John Halifax* or *Amyas Leigh*, and many another whom we have known from childhood. How we should miss even the charming personalities of the children of literature — of the tender *Little Nell*, or bright *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, or sweet, chivalrous *Wee Willie Winkie*. We love them all, and could not do without them; and many an interesting study might be made of such characters as these, comparing one with another, and drawing out the lesson which each life has been designed to teach by acting it, as it were, on mimic stage before us.

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Nor, we think, can the range of works selected here fail to suggest some interesting thoughts to students of our English literature. It is singular, indeed, to look back to the date of Miss Burney's *Evelina*, and to remember that novels before her time were too coarse for any perusal of the gentler sex. Doubtless such stories as *Evelina* and *Camilla* were eagerly devoured by the young people of those days, while Miss Austen's choice miniature paintings must have been still more carefully treasured by those whose perceptions were keen enough to take in their beauties—beauties which are now, curiously enough, forming the taste of readers in the younger world of America.

But what a revolution in the kingdom of fiction was created by the appearance of *Waverley* and its successors, and how the fascination of these novels was only enhanced by their proceeding from the pen of a 'great unknown,' may be more easily imagined than described; nor can we forget to look upon it as a subject of devout thankfulness that this stream of literature which flowed so long from one source flowed also so crystal pure, never tainted by false principle or unworthy thought, but always true to loyalty, honour,

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and virtue. How much Sir Walter Scott may have done to 'set the tone' of fiction for future generations it is, indeed, impossible to calculate.

The contrast between the two great contemporary writers—Thackeray and Dickens—would form an interesting study of itself. Both took in hand to lash the vices and expose the sins and miseries of the world in differing ranks of society. For beauty of style, combining noblest pathos and keenest satire with the most finished word-painting, Thackeray must surely bear the palm; but Charles Dickens will probably always stand nearest to the heart of England, most in sympathy with her toiling, sorrowing millions, 'feeling *with* not *for* the people,' whose sufferings haunted him till he stood forth their champion with unrelenting pen, winning for them the reform of many an abuse, and pressing even the power of the ludicrous into the service of humanity.

There are, probably, few who will not regret the impetus towards the fantastic and sensational in fiction which was given by the weird sisters of the North—the Brontës. They have found a host of successive imitators, who, like all inferior artists, have deepened their shadows to blackness, while they have lost the

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light which streamed here and there in delicate purity over their sombre pictures.

In Dinah Muloch, and in Mrs. Gaskell (herself the generous and loyal biographer of Currer Bell), we have examples of the exact opposite in female authorship, healthy in tone, and combining tenderness with strength.

Of the works of Charles Kingsley, whose name is as a household word loved and honoured amongst us, and of his less great brother Henry, greater only in his keener sense of humour, we might find many things to say; but enough has been pointed out to show our readers the scope of the work which we have tried to do in bringing before them this gallery of portraits, painted by living artists, dressed in the costumes of many successive periods, set off, as far as may be, with appropriate backgrounds, and framed each in their separate settings as becomes their worth and dignity.

We leave them now to study the characters for themselves.

M. E. TOWNSEND.

Evelina.

EVELINA.

By FRANCES BURNEY.

‘Deriving her inspiration in part from Richardson, Frances Burney heads the roll of those female novelists whose works form a considerable part of English literature. The purity of her writings first made the circulating library respectable. “We owe to her,” says Macaulay very justly, “not only Evelina, Cecilia, and Camilla, but Mansfield Park and the Absentee.”’

L. B. SEELEY—*‘Fanny Burney and Her Friends.’*

Evelina.

*'A smooth and stedfast mind,
Gentle thoughts and calm desires,
Hearts with equal love combined,
Kindle never-dying fires :
Where these are not, I despise
Lovely checks, or lips, or eyes.'*

THOMAS CAREW (1589-1639).

EVELINA is perhaps rather the principal character of a celebrated story than a great character herself ; yet she has in her more of the elements of a great character than her timidity would at first lead us to suppose. She is, when introduced to us, a lovely, but simple and timid girl, well brought up in a retired home ; and her good sense and high principle only emerge gradually from a fog of overpowering shyness.

The story of *Evelina* holds a very important place in English literature from being the first novel which was readable by ladies. It was published in 1778, and opened a new field of enjoyment to the daughters of England. The English princesses were allowed to read *Evelina*, and the sensation which it made in the whole reading public could not now be believed. The novels had been hitherto almost unreadable on

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account of their coarseness—society was very coarse even in the higher circles; but Miss Fanny Burney, the authoress, had taste and tact and sense to put it forth only in such a form as could be read without offence, though some of the characters are in themselves coarse enough.

Frances Burney was the daughter of a popular organist and writer on musical subjects, and lived in a happy, easy, middle-class fashion till she had the good or ill fortune to be chosen as reader and lady-in-waiting to good Queen Charlotte, wife of George III. Though the Queen was most amiable, those about her were not always so, and Frances led a dreary life enough, till at last she broke free from court trammels and married a French refugee named D'Arblay. None of her writings were equal to *Evelina*, which took society by storm, and made its young authoress famous at once.

It may seem remarkable that Fanny Burney's fame should have lasted so long. Macaulay, in reviewing her *Diary and Letters* in 1843, writes thus of her early productions, and gives the clue to the secret:—

‘Many books, written for temporary effect, had run through six or seven editions, and had been then gathered to the novels of Afra Behn, and the epic poems of Sir Richard Blackmore, yet the early works of Madame d'Arblay, in spite of the lapse of years, in spite of the change of manners, in spite of the popularity deservedly obtained by some of her rivals, continued to hold a high place in public

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esteem. She lived to be a classic. Time set on her fame, before she went hence, that seal which is seldom set except on the fame of the departed. Like Sir Condry Rackrent in the tale, she survived her own wake, and overheard the judgment of posterity !’

Evelina, heroine of the story, went by the name of Miss Anville, though her real name, unknown even to herself, was Belmont. She is represented as the child of an unhappy and gentle woman of inferior birth, whose husband, Sir John Belmont, attracted by her charms, had afterwards basely deserted her.

Evelina, on her mother’s death, was adopted by an admirable clergyman of the name of Villars, and enjoyed the friendship of a wise and good neighbour, Lady Howard. Thus the girl grew up, very lovely, but quite unconscious of her beauty, well educated and refined, but in so quiet a circle that she had not learned any of the world’s ways and fashions, when at the urgent request of Lady Howard she was allowed by Mr. Villars to visit that kind friend at Howard Grove, and thence to go to London with Lady Howard’s daughter, Mrs. Mirvan, to meet her husband, Captain Mirvan, on his return from abroad, and to enjoy a first sight of the great city in company with her own dear friend, Maria Mirvan.

Here begin poor Evelina’s trials. At her first dance she commits the dreadful mistake of refusing one partner and accepting another. The scene is very amusing, as Evelina relates it in a letter to her vener-

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able friend, Mr. Villars. (The whole book is in the form of letters.)

‘ A young man, who had for some time looked at us with a kind of negligent impertinence, advanced on tiptoe towards me ; he had a set smile on his face, and his dress was so foppish that I really believe he even wished to be stared at ; and yet he was very ugly.

‘ Bowing almost to the ground with a sort of swing, and waving his hand with the greatest conceit, after a short and silly pause, he said, “ Madam, may I presume ? ” and stopped, offering to take my hand. I drew it back, but could scarce forbear laughing. “ Allow me, madam,” continued he, affectedly breaking off every half-moment, “ the honour and happiness——” Again he would have taken my hand, but bowing my head, I begged to be excused, and turned to Miss Mirvan to conceal my laughter. He then desired to know if I had already engaged myself to some more fortunate man. I said “ No,” and that I believed I should not dance at all. He would keep himself, he told me, disengaged in hopes I should relent ; and then uttering some ridiculous speeches of sorrow and disappointment, though his face still wore the same invariable smile, he retreated.’

Not long after a much more sensible and agreeable-looking man, Lord Orville, persuades the shy, giggling, pretty girl to stand up with him in a dance, and tries her with various subjects of conversation, but she is far too frightened to talk. And when at last the

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affected youth whom she has rejected, one Mr. Lovel, comes up in anger and asks 'to what accident he must attribute the fact of Evelina's dancing with another after refusing him,' she perceives her mistake. 'Tired, ashamed, and mortified, she begs to sit down' till her party shall return home.

Now, here we see several characteristics of our little country beauty. It is her good sense which makes her reject the fop, but her ignorance which makes her accept the more favoured partner, and so arouse anger and jealousy. Nor does she manage better at her next ball, where, to escape a disagreeable partner, she says, untruly, that she is already engaged. From this untruth much unpleasantness arises, and she has to repent it sincerely. The gentleman, suspecting her motive, stays near her, professing to look out for her missing partner, and at last Mrs. Mirvan assures her she *must* dance with him. He still annoys her by inquiry into the name of the absent partner, and by a sign she indicates Lord Orville, who at that moment makes his appearance. This is going from bad to worse; one falsehood has led to another, and the worst of all is that Evelina's teasing partner, suddenly seizing her hand, says to Lord Orville, before Mrs. Mirvan: 'Think, my lord, what must be my reluctance to resign this fair hand to your lordship.'

'I coloured violently,' says Evelina. 'You do me too much honour, sir,' cried Lord Orville. 'However, I shall be happy to profit by it if this lady,' turning

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to Mrs. Mirvan, 'will permit me to seek for her party.'

'To compel him thus to dance I could not endure, and eagerly called out, "By no means—not for the world—I must beg."'

'What *shall* be done, my dear?' said Mrs. Mirvan.

'Nothing, ma'am; anything, I mean.'

'But do you dance or not? You see his lordship waits.'

The scene goes on till Evelina, convicted of her fault, sure that Lord Orville sees how improperly she has used his name, bursts into tears, and has to go home.

Well, this is hardly the conduct of a heroine. It is the conduct of a shy girl, frightened at the great world in which for the first time she finds herself; attracted at once to Lord Orville, the only young man of good sense, refinement, and conduct whom she meets, and who thus reminds her of her beloved adopted father, Mr. Villars, and disgusted by the silly, forward fops who were the men of fashion of that day, when gentlemen dressed in silks, velvets, and laces, and were more affected than any fine lady is now. But the story-telling is quite inexcusable, and shows a weakness of character which we always find in Evelina. Her charm lies in her extraordinary beauty and grace, fresh colour and modest expression. These cannot be put on paper, so we must draw on

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our fancy and make an Evelina to our liking, with the help of the most charming pictures we know.

In a place of amusement, a tall, elderly woman, with a foreign accent, rushes up while the Mirvans and Evelina are waiting for their carriage. She is in want of a coach, and it is raining. Captain Mirvan unwillingly admits her to his own, and in the course of a rather unpleasant conversation, in which Captain Mirvan—a rough sailor—and the stranger lady are equally ill-bred, the latter turns out to be Madame Duval, the grandmother of Evelina. No intercourse had taken place between them, Mr. Villars dreading the bad influence of Madame Duval on his adopted daughter. But now the meeting has accidentally taken place, Evelina must needs show all respect to her aged but very frivolous relative. She stays with her in London, leaving her kind friends, the Mirvans, for this purpose. Madame Duval introduces her to some commonplace but very amusing relatives, the Branghtons, who keep a silversmith's shop on Snow Hill, and in this house Evelina has an opportunity of showing her better feelings and real power of using her influence for good. It happens thus:—

A young Scotch gentleman, a poet, named Macartney, who lodges with the Branghtons, and to whom Evelina has shown a delicate respect, is reduced by poverty and pride to the verge of despair. While waiting in a parlour alone, she sees the young man rush up the staircase to his room with a per-

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turbed and affrighted look. At the corner of the stairs, in his hurry, he slipped and fell, and Evelina plainly perceived the end of a pistol which started from his pocket as he struck against the stairs. She was inexpressibly shocked. All that she had heard of his misery occurring to her memory, made her conclude that he was at that very moment contemplating suicide. Yielding to a noble impulse, she followed him, and looking in at his door saw him on his knees, a pistol in each hand, and as he called out, 'O God, forgive me!' Evelina rushed in, caught his arm, and though nearly fainting with emotion, she had courage and presence of mind to pick up the pistols which Macartney in his surprise had dropped, and when he would have seized them she exclaimed, 'Oh, sir, have mercy upon yourself!' Her beauty, her white robe, made the wretched man think he sees an angel, and when he cries, 'Why, for what purpose, tell me, do you withhold them?' she answers, 'To give you time to *think*; to save you from eternal misery; and, I hope, to reserve you for mercy and forgiveness.'

Space fails to follow Evelina through her various adventures, which come much thicker and faster than in real life. She finds her unnatural father, Sir John Belmont, during a visit to Bath, and wins his love by her gentle beauty and her likeness to her mother, whose memory—beloved though injured as she was—returns on him in full force. In the once wretched

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Macartney she finds a brother whom the cruel father also acknowledges, though late, allowing his marriage with a worthy girl to whom Sir John gives a portion ; and, after many troubles, Evelina herself becomes at last the happy wife of the good Lord Orville.

The tale is long, and every incident is most minutely described, but it is well worth reading, and if our readers like to ask for it at old bookstalls, they may perhaps obtain it for a modest sum. The characters are broadly drawn ; the extremes of fantastic luxury, and of coarse vulgarity, meet in one picture in a way which seems strange to our more educated age, when good manners are the rule in all but the lowest class. But our Evelina moves among them all, simple, right-minded, though unwise sometimes from extreme timidity, but coming out safely from many awkward situations by the protecting force of her own inner purity.

That which strikes us most in the book is its vivacious style, and the marked contrast between a few refined and delicate-minded women, and the rough practical jokes which were apparently not out of favour in that day even in the highest circles. For instance, the constant quarrelling between Captain Mirvan and Madame Duval, ending in his leading her a wild-geese chase to visit a friend in misfortune, and then, with a young baronet of more wit than manners, setting upon her in the guise of highwaymen, seating her, tied hand and foot, in a ditch, minus her head-dress and wig,

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exposed to the ridicule of her own flunkeys. This is a sort of joke which we can hardly understand, but which lends considerable force to a tale of adventure.

And through such scenes, and worse, we still find the elder novelists portraying virtuous womanhood capable of moving—like Una in Spenser's exquisite poem—without a stain on the white robe of her purity. Such women have ever held in their hands the guiding thread to all real power and influence, and such it is our part to strive after now as ever.

Anne Elliott.

PERSUASION.

By JANE AUSTEN.

'Jane Austen's proper theme was the English lady as she ought to be ; and as our friendship with her heroines becomes more strongly knit, we feel not only assured that none such had been produced in fiction since Shakespeare, but half inclined to doubt whether the ambitious novelist of later days, with all his widening range of scene and character, has ever created women quite so worthy of the noble name of lady.'

W. WARDE FOWLER.

Anne Elliott.

*'Thou, who canst give to lightest lay
An unpedantic moral gay,
Nor less the dullest theme bid flit
On wings of unexpected wit,
In letters as in life approved,
Example honoured and beloved.'*

SCOTT.

PERSUASION is a story of the earlier years of the century. In Anne Elliott we have the picture of the development of the gentle, submissive girl of the earlier years of the century, a maiden who has yielded to family opinion and influences, but who has a root of hidden strength within her. Perhaps it has the more force from not having been put forth in earlier struggles, but having been always repressed.

We meet her first when she is seven-and-twenty ; a little faded, but more from the wearing effect of her life than from age. She is the daughter of a vain, conceited man, whose cold contempt had assisted in preventing her, when very young, from engaging herself to a spirited naval officer. This is the 'Persuasion' which gives name to the book. Anne has been *persuaded*, partly as a matter of deference to her father, and partly by the inducement of her kindest friends,

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to refuse her lover utterly, and break off all connexion with him. Ever since, her life has gone on in a dull course, without any real companionship, since her mother's death — for her elder sister is as proud, pompous, and shallow as her father, and the younger, with equally little intellect, is a perpetual grumbler ; yet there is no discontent or restlessness on Anne's part ; she accepts her natural surroundings, and quietly makes the best of them without consciousness of effort. It would have seemed to her little short of high treason, almost an act of insanity, to confess even to herself that her father was so dictatorial and stupid, or that the lack of intellectual cultivation was so painful that she must needs find interests elsewhere. She reads, she follows up her accomplishments, as young ladies used to do in those days ; does not fret or pine, but is quietly patient of a far from cheerful lot.

We take her up just as her father has decided on letting his house and going to live in Bath. The place, Bellynch Hall, is taken by a delightful, good-natured admiral, who is married to the sister of her former lover, Captain Wentworth.

Anne, with no choice of her own, is left behind to make a long visit to her younger sister, Mary Musgrave, a wonderful portrait of the perpetual grumbler. She is married to the heir of a neighbouring squire, and her perpetual theme is her fancied slights from his whole family, not to speak of her troubles with her servants and children. She lives in

Anne Elliott.

a perpetual state of complaint of her husband's kindred, and yet of seeking their companionship, and Anne has to hear it all. Indeed, Anne is one of those kindly and safe people who, without any pretence of sympathy, become universal *confidants*, and hear both sides of a question. It is no small perfection to be able to do this as a peace-maker, not a mischief-maker. Of course, Captain Wentworth comes to stay with his sister, having no other home, and Anne has in silence and self-control to go through the trials, not only of meeting him, but of perceiving that he has not forgiven her, but is attracted by Louisa Musgrave—a silly, shallow, lively girl of nineteen.

Anne watches all, never compromising her dignity or her sweetness, more wounded than pleased by an occasional little touch of feeling into which Captain Wentworth is betrayed, but never showing sharpness or bitterness, or letting her sensations be suspected. All is given in little touches, but we feel the full beauty of self-control. By-and-by, all go for a party of pleasure to Lyme, to visit some naval friends of Captain Wentworth, one of whom is in a state of deep dejection over the loss by death of his lady-love. There Louisa, through her own obstinate folly, meets with an accident, alarming at first, but which detains her there till after Anne has been summoned to Bath, where others of the party gradually arrive, and where, ere long, they are utterly electrified by the tidings that the lively, merry Louisa, no doubt in her

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subdued state of recovery, has become engaged to the melancholy, sentimental gentleman whom they had left mourning for his love!

Anne has, shortly after, a conversation with this poor lady's brother, who is sore over the speed with which she has been forgotten, and it is then that the words are drawn from her, by an argument on the comparative constancy of men and women, 'All the privilege that I claim for my own sex (it is not a very enviable one, you need not covet it) is that of loving longest, when existence and when hope is gone.'

Captain Wentworth is within hearing. Though seemingly absorbed in a letter, he has caught the words, and they give him courage to confess that his heart has always been Anne's, though resentment had held him apart, till the accident taught him 'to distinguish between the steadiness of principle and the obstinacy of self-will, between the daring of heedlessness and the resolution of a collected mind,' and thus all ends happily, and Anne's sweet patience and self-command are rewarded.

It was Miss Austen's last story, and has more depth of feeling and pathos than most of hers. There is a family tradition (though not inserted in her life) that while on a tour in Wales she became acquainted with a gentleman, who parted giving her to understand that he should shortly appear at her home in Hampshire. He never came, and it was not till after

Anne Elliott.

a considerable interval that she learnt that he had died by an accident not long after their meeting. If true, this recollection may breathe in Anne's words.

Jane Austen's are all maidens of the last century, without aspirations after a career, leading quiet lives in their homes, dutiful and refined. Even Emma, who is lively, domineering, and adventurous, is perfectly devoted to her feeble, wearisome old father, and continually sacrifices her pleasure to him without a word of disrespect or discontent ; Elizabeth, though high-spirited and with her strong sense of the absurd, is equally forbearing to her foolish, vulgar mother ; Eleanor, though seeing her mother's imprudence in being carried along by Marianne's unguarded, impetuous sentiment, only utters gentle remonstrances ; and Fanny, though brought up to a very different sphere from that of her family at Portsmouth, never asserts her superiority. Excepting with Anne and Emma, full-grown life has begun with these girls much sooner than it does, happily, with most now. Marianne Dashwood's vehement demonstrations and emotions begin at sixteen, when she ought to have been in the midst of her studies, and Catharine Morland's mare's-nest romance was the work of only a year later in age. The delicate miniature painting of the characters in these tales is apt not to be appreciated by the young, and the tone of county society of that day disgusts them ; but as they grow older they perceive how much ability and insight is displayed in the

Anne Elliott.

work, and esteem the forbearance, sweetness, and self-restraint of such a heroine as Anne.

Miss Austen's own account of her works was, that they were like 'a little bit of ivory two inches wide, on which she worked with a brush so fine as to produce little effect after much labour.'

But she had the *seeing* eye, the just appreciation, and the true suppressed sense of humour which rendered these miniatures effective, though only of the commonplace, alike in scenes and characters. Her imagination never carried her beyond what she thoroughly knew and understood in her quiet home life, which was almost entirely without events, and ended in early middle life, before her home had been broken up by the death of her mother.

Sir Walter Scott much admired her works, and they have grown in popularity ever since her time. They are now actually subjects of examination at American Universities.

Esmond.

ESMOND.

By W. M. THACKERAY.

'Esmond is—and here the high art and the high morality of Mr. Thackeray's genius is shown—altogether a man of his own age. . . . The temptations which he conquers are just those under which the men around him fall. But how does he conquer them? By holding fast throughout to honour, duty, virtue. Thus and thus alone he becomes an ideal eighteenth-century gentleman, an eighteenth-century hero. This was what Mr. Thackeray meant—for he told me so himself—that it was possible, even in England's lowest and foulest times, to be a gentleman and a hero, if a man would but be true to the light within him.'—CHARLES KINGSLEY.

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*'Fortune, good or ill, as I take it, does not change men and women.
It but develops their characters.'*—ESMOND.

IT is difficult to think of Esmond as of a character in fiction. His story is so perfectly set in a framework of history, that one can scarcely believe that he did not really exist as he is represented, side by side with Addison, Steele, General Webb, Lord Mohun, and the Chevalier of St. George. For the same reason, it is impossible to regard the book which tells Esmond's story in the light of a mere novel. It is a novel, undoubtedly, but it is also more. It is a history, and that of the best kind, for it deals with the social rather than the political side of events. It is a history of English people of the period in which the action of the story is laid—namely, in the reigns of William III. and Anne. It presents us with a series of pictures of their life and manners, dealing also, as true history always must, with the state of religion and literature.

'I would have history, familiar rather than heroic,' says the author, on his very first page. And so we have those great and startling events, which we are apt to consider as alone constituting history proper, such as the great victories of Marlborough, shown us,

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not as isolated facts, but in their relation to others existing at the time. The splendid names of Blenheim, Ramilies, and the rest, will be, for those who have read *Esmond*, no more connected solely with their effect on the balance of European power, nor with their results on the fortunes of a few private persons in high places in England ; but they will be associated with the real horrors of war, such as the pillage which follows a great victory ; and also with the lives of those engaged in them, with the daring and recklessness of the young officers, and the woes and ways of the private soldiers. Moreover, in *Esmond* we find people whose worth and importance is of different kinds, placed in a better light with regard to each other than is always possible in a history proper. Marlborough, as represented by Thackeray, is not in all his glory a greater or more enduring figure than Addison in his garret in the Haymarket.

What a charming description that is of the poet, in Chapter XI., Book II. We seem to see him ‘poring over a folio volume at the bookshop near to St. James’s Church . . . a fair, tall man, in a snuff-coloured suit, with a plain sword, very sober and almost shabby in appearance ;’ and afterwards, receiving ‘his guests in his apartment, which was indeed but a shabby one, though no grandee of the land could receive his guests with a more perfect and courtly grace than this gentleman.’

We hear, too, as much of Dick the Scholar, first

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as trooper, then as Captain Steele, as of General Webb, while the Chevalier of St. George, now somewhat contemptuously buried for us under the name of the 'Old Pretender,' is shown in all his weakness and folly, yet surrounded by that mist, half of poetry, half of sanctity, through which a great part of the nation at that period regarded the members of the House of Stuart.

And it is because this story of *Esmond* thus brings to our near regard an age now past, an age with different manners and less refinement than our own, that we are conscious, as we read, of much that is discordant with our own modern tastes. The jests, the gambling, and the drinking, for instance, belong to the habits of that age, as does the duelling. We do not care to read about them; we are sometimes surprised to find the unspotted hero of the book is not himself shocked by them; but we feel that the picture would be incomplete without them. The true artist, the faithful historian of the age of Anne, could not leave them out. And Thackeray is more than these. He is among the poets, the true lovers of mankind. 'He nothing human alien deems unto himself.' Look at the closing paragraph of Book I. and you will see what I mean.

The reader of *Esmond* must have something of this mind, too, or he will not be able to appreciate the book. In nothing, indeed, is this great author's skill more shown than in the art with which he reproduces

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the follies, caprices, and vices of a past age, with all that makes it different from our own. He makes us feel, as we read, that it was different rather than worse, and with subtle power leads us to pity where we cannot admire; to love what is good in spite of the ill that clings to it; and most of all, to love that good which is perfected and heightened in the struggle with evil, and in quiet self-sacrifice, which is at once 'heroic' and 'familiar.' Most of all, he makes us love and reverence Esmond himself. It would take too long, and it would also be unfair to the reader, to give more than the briefest outline of Esmond's own beautiful story. It is, also, a specially difficult one to tell, as it is a tale of long patience, and of that truth and tenderness, both in him and in her whom the reader comes to feel is the real heroine of the tale, which can only be made perfect in the slow fires of suffering and the self-devotion of every day. The characters of Henry Esmond and of Lady Castlewood are such as grow upon one with every fresh reading of the book. The author is too great an artist to make either of them flawless. In the lady, especially, we mark those particular defects which we are sometimes inclined to think Thackeray must have believed inseparable from all charming women. But when these are subtracted, we feel that in Esmond and his mistress we have before us a perfect gentleman and lady, in the best sense of the words.

In our early days of novel-reading, we are apt to

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be swept away by admiration for the youth of impossible daring and courage. We are in love with his very insolence and independence of common human things; with his fiery impetuosity, his pride which can brook no check. It is but a part of that youthful error which leads us to neglect the near in longings for the distant, and makes us believe the noblest things are those which are far away. As our experience grows, life and character become differently focussed for us. Such a hero as I have described we come to find is not merely (and fortunately) untrue to nature, but even if he did exist he would not be a fine creature after all, and we wonder how we could ever have thought so. I will say no more definitely of Esmond than that he is not like such an imaginary character.

While still quite a child, Henry Esmond was adopted by his father's cousin. There was a mystery about his birth, and the boy grew up in the belief his kind relations also shared, that his mother, an obscure Frenchwoman, was not properly married to his father, Thomas Viscount Castlewood, who certainly forsook her and was afterwards married to an Englishwoman of his own rank. Henry was therefore in a dependent position in the house of Castlewood. But this he little felt, on account of the kindness of his young mistress, who became, when he first made her acquaintance, soon like an elder sister to him. The day when she laid a fair hand on the head of the

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lonely orphan boy was for him the beginning of a life-long devotion to her and to her children. Years after, a grave man, older than his years, after long absence which was enhanced by strange vicissitudes of fortune, he came to lie once more on the little bed he had occupied at Castlewood. In the room, familiar from childhood, he remembered how when years ago, a boy on that very bed, she had blessed him and called him her knight, he had made a vow to be faithful and never desert her dear service. Had he kept that fond, boyish promise? Yes, before heaven! yes, praise be to God! His life had been hers; his blood, his fortune, his name, his whole heart ever since had been hers and her children's.

Lord Castlewood was unworthy of his beautiful wife. He was rough and coarse in feeling and manners, though not without a certain nobility of character and kindness of heart. The gradual estrangement between the pair is wonderfully told. Henry remained the friend of each, and, grown to a young man, stood by his patron in the fatal duel which ended his life. It was then, from the lips of the dying man, that he learned a secret which Lord Castlewood himself had only possessed a few months. Henry's mother had been legally married to his father, and therefore he himself, and not his dying patron, was the real Viscount. Consequently the boy Frank, at Castlewood, the darling son of Henry's dear mistress, was not the heir to the great name and

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property, but born to a comparatively obscure position. By the advice of Bishop Atterbury, who is made to attend his dying bed, Henry's patron put his signature to a written confession of this great secret. But the young man almost instantly resolved to make no use of information which would bring misery on those he loved, and he burnt the paper in the presence of the Bishop.

For a long time this act of self-sacrifice was unknown to those whom it most affected, and Esmond himself was separated, partly by a misunderstanding and partly by her own scruples, from Lady Castlewood and her children.

When he came back to them, and this was not till after his first military campaign, he found his mistress more gracious, gentle, and loving than ever, and her daughter Beatrix grown into the most beautiful creature he had ever seen. He straightway fell in love with her, and from this time the 'History of Henry Esmond, Esq.,' consists greatly of vain attempts to win the young lady's favour.

Beatrix, of surpassing beauty and brilliant gifts, was a wayward creature, with many of her father's faults. Her love of admiration made her fickle. 'Thou wilt always forsake an old friend for a new one, Trix,' her father said to her, when she was only four years old. And years after her mother said, 'Beatrix loves admiration more than love. The man who would marry her will not be happy with

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her unless he be a great person, and can put her in a great position.'

It is fair to Beatrix to say that if she loved to provoke Esmond's admiration, and she thought all admiration worth having, she gave him no encouragement to hope that she would ever become his wife; for she openly professed she would marry for the highest rank she could. Her own inconstant nature, combined with uncontrollable fate, frustrated one of her schemes after another, and each time he found her free Esmond's foolish hope revived. To please her, he sought to distinguish himself in war; but though she was gratified that he should give and do all for her, she was no more ready to give anything herself. And all the time he had the painful reflection, that if he had not chosen to sacrifice himself for her family, if he had claimed the title and estates which were justly his, he could also have had the wife he wanted.

The 'great person' duly appeared—really great, in character as well as in position and name. The suitor to whom Beatrix pledged herself was none other than the Duke of Hamilton, known to his time by his noble qualities, and his high courage which was as wide as his charity. Esmond, who already knew in his heart of hearts that he could not make Beatrix his wife, was in a manner prepared for this final blow to his hopes. He could even feel relieved that the torture of suspense was over. For him he

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felt there could be but one woman, and he brought her as a wedding gift the costly diamonds, a family heirloom which were his to give to his own bride. It befits the simple greatness of his hero's character that the author should make no special remark upon this act of sacrifice which showed how completely his love was free from selfishness.

The Duke of Hamilton was killed in a duel—famous in history—with the base Lord Mohun, and on Esmond devolved the painful task of telling Beatrix of the loss of one who would not only have gratified her worldly ambitions, but who would also have made her a noble husband.

Then for the faithful lover, began once more the torture of unreasonable hope. At last, and this brings us to the close of the book, Esmond devised a mad scheme to win Beatrix. Knowing her romantic devotion to the House of Stuart, he formed a plan by which the chief representative, the son of James II., then living at Versailles under the name of the Chevalier of St. George, should be brought to England and introduced at Court. Queen Anne was old and ill, her own children had died, and it was hoped she would receive this young brother with some favour. How the scheme failed, both in its public and private ends, must be read in the book itself.

And what was the end of Esmond's story? That indeed it is not fair to tell, except that it was the most natural one that could be. Further details of his life

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will be found in the preface to the book, which should certainly not be read before the book itself. The story of Esmond does not really end here, but melts into that of his descendants, the Virginians.

Something should have been said of the style in which the book is written. The reader must remember that it is not merely old, but that its finish and art consist in its being an older style than our own, used to describe events which are still older.

I can only hope, in conclusion, that enough has been said in this short sketch to induce some to enter thoughtfully on the reading of this great work, the masterpiece, perhaps, of one of our greatest English novelists.

Colonel Newcome.

THE NEWCOMES.

By W. M. THACKERAY.

*'He had our English way of making fun
Of those shy feelings which our hearts will hold
Like dewdrops all a-tremble, and enfold
Them with our sheltering strength from storm and sun.*

* * * * *

*'He was not one of those who are light at heart
Because 'tis empty in its airy swing :
He found the world too full of sorrowing,
But showed us how to smile and bear our smart.*

*'Many of God's most precious gifts are sad
To tears, and, though no weeper, this he knew,
So in our merry wine would steep the rue,
That with a manlier strength we might grow glad.'*

GERALD MASSEY on W. M. THACKERAY.

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*'We gather grapes of joy up in the sun,
But our best wine must ripen in the gloom.'*

GERALD MASSEY.

ALTHOUGH the great novelist, Thackeray, has entitled his book, *The Newcomes* in the plural number, and although in its second chapter it is for the history of the young Clive that he ostensibly bespeaks our interest, still we believe every one will agree that the real hero of the story is, and always will be, none other than Colonel Newcome himself. It is over this exquisite portrait of a noble character that the artist lingers most lovingly; it is this figure which is brought out touch by touch as the tale goes on, whereof many chapters may be found lengthy by the reader where Colonel Newcome is absent, but none, we venture to think, where he is present. The ingenuous Clive, who was yet so much more worldly than his father; the high-spirited and affectionate, though very faulty Ethel; the tender, womanly Laura, the odious Barnes, the gay De Florac, the detestable 'Campaigner,' only serve to bring out this great character into higher relief, and the whole effect is enhanced by the deep reverence, coupled with a kind of pathetic humour, with which the imaginary narrator follows at every turn this one biography with-

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out neglecting the rest of his *dramatis personæ*. There is, perhaps, no more characteristic scene in the whole book than that in which, at the first outset of the story, the father and son are introduced to the reader in the 'Cave of Harmony,' where the simple-hearted Colonel joins heartily in all the fun as long as it is harmless, and departs in a fiery flame of wrath as soon as ever it becomes such as would offend his boy's innocent ears and his own childlike soul.

Colonel Newcome had but just returned on leave from India, where, after having been considered something of a scapegrace by uncomprehending parents at home, he had risen to be a gallant officer, beloved by all who knew him, that is, by all 'who loved modesty, generosity, and honour,' and leaving his regiment after thirty-four years' service in a state of the highest discipline and efficiency. Early left a widower with one child, his whole soul is wrapt up, first in this boy, whom he has not seen for nine years, having sent him to England for education, and next in his family, his affection for which is so wide and all-embracing that it includes not only the rich and rising members of it, but the homely spinster who lets lodgings by the seaside and the old nurse in her humble cottage at Newcome.

How inimitably has our author painted for us the Colonel's astonishment at his own reception by his prosperous banker brethren and their wives. How humorous is the account of the first visit to Bryanston

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Square, the accidental meeting with the voluble French governess and the children, the great Mrs. Newcome driving up in her barouche and patronising the Colonel, whom she does *not* ask to dinner. While, on the other hand, with what delicate grace and fun is the scene in the Brighton lodging-house presented to us, when Lady Anne Newcome's class prejudices go down before the roast chicken and bread-sauce supplied to her darling little invalid by the ancient Miss Honeyman. How well is the distinction drawn between the families of the two sisters-in-law, while, to the credit of Lady Anne's breeding, it must be recorded that she, at least, early appreciated the true nobility of the Colonel's character, which was altogether lost on Mrs. Hobson Newcome's vulgar soul.

Meantime, the simple-hearted soldier moves amongst them all, puzzled at the hollow conventionalities around him, yet kind and thoughtful for every one. We can almost fancy we see the fine figure, the bald head, the full moustache, the half-smiling mouth, and sad eyes. Ah, yes! in those eyes can still be read the tale of a bygone sorrow; in that unforgetting heart sleeps still the memory of a first and faithful love, which has made him chivalrous and tenderly respectful to all women, and beloved by them accordingly. But that heart is hungry still, for even the father's passionate devotion to his boy does not meet with the satisfaction that he might have looked for. Not that Clive does not love his father—far from it, but as years go on and

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manhood comes upon him, there comes also that change of thought and feeling which every parent's heart must learn to expect. The growing youth or maiden enters upon life with different views and ideas from those of a former generation, and however their elders may try to keep up with them and innocently think themselves as young as the youngest, however much they may sacrifice themselves to bring brightness and gaiety into their children's surroundings, still they will constantly find themselves left behind ; they will find—and how natural it is that it should be so—that they are excluded from a thousand little intimate confidences, amusing trifles, and harmless entertainments which they long to enter into ; and they will often see that smile of half-pitying superiority which means, 'No one does that now,' or—'All those ideas belong to a bygone age !'

Perhaps one of the most touching pictures in the whole of the book we are studying, is that of the Colonel 'sitting below in his blank, cheerless bedroom,' and listening to the snatches of gay laughter, where 'the lad and his friends were talking, singing, and making merry overhead.'

'They had all sorts of tricks, bywords, and waggeries, of which the father could not understand the jest nor its secret. He longed to share in it, but the party would be hushed if he went in to join it, and he would come away sad at heart to think that his presence should be a signal for silence among them, and that his son could not be merry in his company.'

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By Thomas Newcome, with his childlike heart and kindly spirit, this condition of things would be far more acutely felt than by many another, and therefore his return to India was the most natural and perhaps the wisest step he could take under the circumstances. On that return to India, and on the consequences it brought about, much of the story hangs. When next we see our hero, it is as the prosperous shareholder in the apparently flourishing Bundelcund Banking Company, showering benefits and luxuries on all around him, amassing a fortune simply to lay at his son's feet, but single-minded and unworldly as ever himself, and, alas! as innocent of money matters the while as any baby. And still the great wish of his heart remains ungratified. Ethel, his beloved niece—the only woman who has ever reminded him of his lost Léonore—is still free, and still returns his Clive's devotion with apparent coldness and condescension, while she allows her worldly old grandmother to drag her about from one gay assembly to another, and openly to put her up for auction to the highest bidder in the matrimonial market.

And here we cannot refrain from quoting the picture which our novelist has given us of the said Ethel at seventeen years old. There is something about it so in harmony with the character of the Colonel, and withal so fascinating, that we cease to wonder at his pertinacious attempts to take her to his heart as a daughter.

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‘She is rather taller than the majority of women, of a countenance somewhat grave and haughty, but on occasion brightening with humour or beaming with kindness and affection. Too quick to detect affectation or insincerity in others, too impatient of dulness or pomposity, she is more sarcastic now than she became when after years of suffering had softened her nature. Truth looks out of her bright eyes, and rises up armed, and flashes scorn or denial, perhaps too readily, when she encounters flattery, or meanness, or imposture. After her first appearance in the world, if the truth must be told, this young lady was popular neither with many men nor with most women. The innocent dancing youth who pressed around her, attracted by her beauty, were rather afraid, after a while, of engaging her. This one felt dimly that she despised him; another, that his simpering commonplaces only occasioned Miss Newcome’s laughter. . . . The young women were frightened at her sarcasm. . . . In Miss Ethel’s black hair there was a slight natural ripple. Her eyes were grey, her mouth rather large, her teeth regular and bright . . . her voice low and sweet, and her smile, when it lighted up her face and eyes, as beautiful as spring sunshine; also they could lighten and flash often, and sometimes, though rarely, rain. As for her figure—but as this tall, slender form is concealed in a simple white muslin robe, in which her fair arms are enveloped, and which is confined at her slim waist by an azure ribbon, and descends to her feet, let us make a respectful bow to that fair image of youth, health, and modesty, and fancy it as pretty as we will.’

If, however, we have at all succeeded in drawing for our readers even the most indistinct outline of

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Colonel Newcome's character (which they can best fill in for themselves by an attentive study of this noble book), they will see at a glance that in two points his character differed essentially from that of the brilliant and stately Ethel: no keen flash of scorn, or quick insight to detect imposture was possible to him; and although he loved the innocent gaiety of youth, he had no power of satire nor even sense of humour any more than a child would have. He could not live a double existence, touched on the one side by the deep solemnities of life, and on the other hand enjoying the humour and the fun which to some people so greatly helps to make life bearable. To his guileless mind all was serious, simple, and straightforward, but—once deceived, the impression was indelible and could not be forgotten. His wrath against the cowardly Barnes was exactly in proportion to his astonishment at his duplicity. The impulsive manner in which he embarked in his electioneering campaign, the relentless way in which he—the kindest of men—pursued his enemy, simply because he had been deceived by him, are true to nature, though none but a perfect artist would have dared, even so far as this, to spoil the fair ideal of such a life by introducing passages so regrettable.

But the end crowns all. We see our hero again with the halo of a misfortune, nobly borne, brightening around him; we see him and his favourite Ethel alike purified and softened by affliction received in a humble

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spirit from the Divine mercy. Though Thomas Newcome's steps might well-nigh slip, he could never be cast away, for the heavenly Guide, Whom in the days of his prosperity he was never ashamed to acknowledge before men, was near to uphold him with His hand.

We should suppose that in all literature there is scarcely to be found a more exquisite picture than that of the scene in the Grey Friars' Chapel on Founder's Day, where Pendennis, lifting his eyes from his book, first sees Thomas Newcome habited in the black gown of the pensioners of the hospital, 'his dear old head bent down over his Prayer-book, his Order of the Bath on his breast'—nor a more pathetic one than the closing act of all, when the Colonel, surrounded by his faithful friends in the 'Poor Brother's' cell, calls, with one piercing cry, on the lost love of his faithful youth, unknowing that she is kneeling by his side, and then answers joyfully to the summons for which he has waited so long.

'At the usual evening hour the chapel bell began to toll, and Thomas Newcome's hands, outside the bed, feebly beat time ; and, just as the last bell struck, a peculiar sweet smile shone over his face, and he lifted up his head a little, and quickly said, "*Adsum!*" and fell back. It was the word we used at school when names were called ; and, lo, he whose heart was as that of a little child, had answered to his name, and stood in the presence of The Master.'

Jeanie Deans.

THE HEART OF MIDLOTHIAN.

By SIR WALTER SCOTT.

*' . . . there is no friend like a sister
In calm or stormy weather ;
To cheer one on the tedious way,
To fetch one if one goes astray,
To lift one if one totters down,
To strengthen whilst one stands.'*

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

Jeanie Deans.

'In the characters of Ellen Douglas, Flora MacIvor, Catherine Seyton, Die Vernon, and Jeanie Deans . . . with endless varieties of grace, tenderness, and intellectual power, we find in all a quite infallible and inevitable sense of dignity and justice, a fearless, instant, and untiring self-sacrifice to even the appearance of duty, much more to its real claims.'—SESAME AND LILIES.

IN these days of culture and advanced education, it is surprising to find that the writings of Scott and Thackeray, Kingsley and Mrs. Gaskell, are comparatively unknown to our girls and boys, or only taken up as a last resource when there is 'nothing new' in the house, while the tawdry romances of Ouida and her illiterate satellites are eagerly sought after and devoured; and even when these earlier novels are read, young people speak of them with amusing condescension, as stilted and old-fashioned, and vote the characters priggish and unnatural.

In the stories of the present day the value of truth and purity is too frequently ignored or set aside, while sympathy is excited on behalf of those characters who sacrifice principle to emotion, and hover dangerously near the very brink of crime, if they do not actually commit it. Those who guide their lives by

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religion, and practise the virtues of self-control and absolute sincerity, are almost invariably represented as colourless and unsympathetic, so that we cannot wonder if they fail to arouse interest or enthusiasm. To turn from these latter-day heroines to the pages of Sir Walter Scott, is like stepping from a hothouse of enervating exotics on to the healthy moorland of his native country.

In the *Heart of Midlothian*, the lovely but weak-minded Effie is only brought into notice as are the dark shadows in a picture, in order to throw into more striking relief the unsullied purity and brightness of her sister's character. Our interest in her is merely secondary, and the romance of the story no less than the sketches of character, both humorous and pathetic, centre round the homely figure of the modest Jeanie.

The opening chapters of the novel depict her as the model housewife, the 'home-keeping' daughter of Davie Deans, a stern old Puritan of the strictest sort, and her softer side is only betrayed by her indulgent affection for her younger and prettier sister, the pleasure-loving Effie, who, weary of the monotony of home life, has been serving as apprentice in the shop of Mrs. Saddletree, an old acquaintance in Edinburgh. Jeanie's own quiet love story with her childhood's playmate, the staid young Dominie, Reuben Butler, is but slightly suggested at first to us, although, as the tragic circumstances of her story unfold themselves, and her domestic virtues develop into heroism,

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her powers of affection intensify also, and express themselves more fervently.

The beauty of the picture is the more striking, because that in spite of the varied experiences she undergoes, she retains to the last that simplicity and freshness which reminds us of the heather of her beloved hills.

The plot of the *Heart of Midlothian* is more or less familiar to most of us, and needs only a passing glance. Effie Deans, while apprenticed to Mrs. Saddletree, forms the acquaintance of a reckless and dissipated adventurer, who bears the name of George Robertson, and is mixed up in various discreditable and lawless proceedings. Cajoled by his flattery and believing in his promise of marriage, she allows herself to be betrayed by him, and, from fear of her father's anger, conceals her shame and humiliation even from her tender-hearted sister, and flying from the house of her employer, finds a miserable refuge with a hag named Murdockson and her mad daughter, who are mysteriously connected with George Robertson's earlier life. Here her child is born, and during the delirium into which she falls after its birth, the babe disappears and its fate is wrapped in mystery until the close of the book. The matter becomes public, and Scotch law being especially severe at that period on the crime of child-murder, she is thrown into prison on this awful charge, the fact of the deceit and secrecy she has practised being taken as a well-

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nigh convincing proof of her crime. Broken-hearted as is her father by this terrible humiliation, his rigid morality will not allow of his moving a finger in her defence, although the struggle between his past love for his erring child and his indignation at her fall, go nigh to breaking down the sturdy old Calvinist altogether. Although Jeanie's purity of nature is equally revolted by the sin of her sister, her woman's instinct refuses to admit the possibility of her having committed such a crime, and she at once turns all her thoughts to the hope of saving her.

A message is brought to her by the reluctant Dominie, summoning her to a midnight tryst with an unknown stranger in the lonely vicinity of St. Anthony's Chapel, if she wishes to rescue the unhappy Effie. Her ready wit tells her at once that such a summons can only come from George Robertson, and though her modesty shrinks from encountering a man of such evil reputation, she resolves upon obeying it, in spite of Butler's entreaties and at the risk of his irrevocable displeasure. 'Folk maun do muckle they have little will to do in this world,' she meekly answers him; adding, 'My life and safety are in God's hands, but I'll no spare to risk either of them on the errand I'm gaun to do.' These simple words reflect the spirit in which Jeanie meets each trial in her subsequent undertaking: entire self-sacrifice and devotion to her one object, based on an absolute dependence upon God's will.

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With these words she seems to mount the first step on the upward path of heroism, and committing herself to God's protection, she at last sets out on her midnight walk, like Christiana, in the *Pilgrim's Progress*, 'now in glimmer and now in gloom,' endeavouring to keep off superstitious terror by fixing her mind resolutely on the motive of her enterprise. As she had rightly conjectured, she meets the man who has been the destroyer of her sister's innocence, but who is at least anxious to rescue her from the terrible fate before her. He explains to Jeanie that if she will only declare in court that Effie confided her secret to her, she may yet be saved; but in spite of entreaties, threats, and violence, added to the longing of her loving heart, she resolutely refuses to perjure herself, and the scene might here end yet more tragically but that the arrival of the sheriff's officers, who have a warrant for the arrest of Robertson on another crime, necessitates his immediate flight, and Jeanie succeeds in evading their inquiries and reaching her cottage in safety.

From this point the struggle between Jeanie's love and her truthfulness becomes more and more painful; but, though at one moment her resolution wavers, so torn is she by love and pity, she yet remains firm in her resolve to speak nothing but absolute truth at the trial, whatever may be the result of her doing so.

The scene in the courthouse is deeply pathetic, and reaches its climax when she is appealed to by the

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prisoner with the piteous cry, 'Oh, Jeanie! save me, save me!' and Davie Deans, stricken to the heart with humiliation and grief, is carried senseless out of court.

Broken-hearted though she is, Jeanie adheres to her determination, and the advocate failing to elicit from her any evidence in her sister's favour, the jury reluctantly condemn her as guilty, and the judge solemnly sentences her to be hung. In consideration of her extreme youth the jury entreat the judge to recommend her to the mercy of the Crown, which he consents to do, though he warns both the prisoner and the jury that he has not the slightest hope of a pardon being granted. Effie having received her sentence with the apathy of despair, is led back to her cell, while Jeanie hurries to the house of Mrs. Saddletree, whither her father had been conveyed. While tenderly ministering to his wants, she learns from her hostess that instances have sometimes occurred where a pardon has been extended to criminals by a direct and personal application to the King. Without an instant's hesitation Jeanie determines on endeavouring to win it, unassisted and alone, feeling certain that her desperate attempt will be hindered if she reveals her intention beforehand.

For one moment she kneels by her father's side to implore his blessing, which he bestows mechanically, and in ignorance of her special need for it; then exclaiming, 'He has blessed mine errand,' she hurries

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to Effie's dungeon, and exhorts her to hope. The turnkey, struck by her enthusiastic courage, gives her the valuable advice that she should apply to the Duke of Argyle to intercede at Court for her, and she flies home to St. Leonard's Crag, where she spends the rest of the day in arranging her domestic affairs to the best of her ability, and in securing the services of an old servant for her father during her absence.

This task completed, she sets about her preparations for her journey, which she contemplates making entirely on foot.

What a picture of simplicity and courage is presented to us by the Lowland maiden—barefooted, carrying her spotless white stockings and shoes in her modest bundle, her comely countenance shaded by the tartan snood, preparing to make her long and hazardous journey alone and unaided, strong in her childlike faith and sisterly devotion!

The chief difficulty still remained. How was she to obtain the necessary funds for her undertaking? She could not apply to her father, having determined to keep her plans a secret from him till she was sufficiently far on her journey to render it impossible for him to interfere, and Reuben Butler she knew to be poorer than herself, and therefore she determines to ask the assistance of the eccentric Laird of Dumbiedikes, 'a well-wisher' (or admirer), as she *naïvely* expresses it, of hers from her childhood. She wends her way early next morning to his house,

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and surprises him in a decidedly 'casual' costume. The interview between them is extremely comic, and relieves the tragic tension of the narrative. With her usual sincerity she repels his uncouth attempts at love-making, confessing that she cares only for Reuben Butler, and will never marry any one else. His pique at finding the Laird of Dumbiedikes rejected for a poor dominie, causes him at first to refuse her any assistance, but she has scarcely quitted his grounds before his better nature reasserts itself, and he gallops after her on his Highland pony, arrayed in nightgown and slippers, crowned with a gold-laced hat, and presses a well-filled purse into her hand, containing sufficient to supply all her modest requirements.

Thus equipped, she turns her steps to the humbler dwelling of Butler, her woman's heart yearning for his sympathy and farewell words of affection. At first he disapproves of her scheme, and tries to discourage her, telling her she knows nothing of courts and courtiers, and that such an attempt is madness; but she answers in her homely, earnest fashion, 'I hae that within me that will keep my heart frae failing, and I'm amaist sure I will be strengthened to speak the errand I came for.'

Seeing that no persuasions will induce her to abandon her project, he offers to write for her to the Duke of Argyle, on whose generosity Butler has a claim; but this she refuses also in words of simple

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eloquence. ‘Writing winna do it,’ she says; ‘a letter canna look and pray and beg and beseech as the human voice can do to the human heart. A letter’s like the music ladies have for their spinets, naething but black scores compared to the same tune played or sung.’

Her words carry conviction to her lover’s mind, and ceasing to remonstrate, he furnishes her with a document, given to his grandfather by the former Duke of Argyle, in recognition of his having saved his life in battle. In this paper the Duke calls on his descendants ‘to befriend the said Butler’s family and friends if occasion should arise.’ Armed with this valuable assistance, Jeanie leaves him abruptly, while she still has the courage to maintain a sad but loving smile.

Her journey as far as Durham is accomplished in safety, and although her costume excites some curiosity, her gentle manners and modest appearance win her a kindly welcome at the halting-places she selects. Soon after this her good luck deserts her, and the thrilling adventures through which she passes, and the unexpected revelations she overhears, and which throw new lights on her sister’s story, are sufficiently exciting to satisfy the taste of the most sensation-loving reader of the present day.

The God in Whom she trusts so implicitly does not fail her in her time of danger, and she at last reaches the safe shelter of her kinswoman’s—Mrs.

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Glass's—house in London. She loses no time in seeking an audience with the Duke of Argyle, whose heart, as Jeanie anticipates, warms 'at the sight o' the tartan,' and whose sympathy is still further aroused by her pleasing appearance and unconscious heroism, and by the letter with which Butler has furnished her. The scenes following are full of excitement and novel experiences for Jeanie, but the sincerity and simplicity of her character remains unsullied, although her perfect truthfulness leads her into dangerous quicksands during the royal interview which the Duke succeeds in procuring for her.

After this climax, up to which our interest has been wrought to the highest pitch of tension, the strain is relieved and the narrative lightened with the power of the true artist.

The playful kindness of the Duke on their return journey from Windsor, when he induces Jeanie to discuss the rural matters, which in happier days were matters of vital importance to the humble maiden, and her delight when he declares his preference for 'Dunlop cheese,' and promises to accept one of her own making, is described with much humour and liveliness, and brings us, as well as our heroine, gently back to the level of daily life. Admirably natural also is the anxiety to which Jeanie now becomes a prey on Butler's account. Her mission accomplished, the need for self-devotion past, the woman reasserts herself, and she passes the time of her safe and comfortable return

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journey in torturing doubts as to her lover's health and the state of his feelings towards herself, dreading lest he may have come to the conclusion during her absence that a marriage with one so unfortunately connected would be fatal to his prospects as a minister.

The evident quickening and deepening of her love, and the development of intelligence and sensitiveness which shows itself more and more at this part of her story, renders her ever dearer and more sympathetic to us. Jeanie Deans is a beautiful and true type of woman of the best kind in any rank of life, capable of heroism through her affections and her moral courage alone; enabled to defy custom and face obstacles before which a man even might quail when devotion requires it, and yet retaining her virgin simplicity and tenderness of heart unsullied; so that once her object is achieved, she becomes again the humble rustic maiden first introduced to us, but with a widened sympathy and charity taught her by the knowledge of human passion, sin, and suffering, which has been brought so near to her.

It has often been said that Sir Walter Scott excelled in his feminine characters, and we must, we think, agree in this assertion, and venture to assign the foremost place to this beautiful type of a Lowland lassie, which he has drawn with such truth and with such a loving touch.

We hope, therefore, that our favourite Jeanie will

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not long remain a stranger to any who have hitherto been unacquainted with her, but that they will learn to admire her as we do, and recognise the crystal clearness with which her little figure stands out conspicuous among the many charming heroines of the Waverley novels.

Morton and Evandale.

OLD MORTALITY.

By SIR WALTER SCOTT.

*'And ever, by the winter hearth,
Old tales I heard of woe or mirth,
Of lovers' sleights, of ladies' charms,
Of witches' spells, of warriors' arms.'*

SIR WALTER SCOTT

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'The curse of growing factions and divisions still vex your counsels.'

THIS motto, taken from the pages of *Old Mortality*, sounds, as it were, the keynote of the story, which, while ranking foremost among the Waverley novels for variety of character sketches, stirring incidents, and infinite humour, affords also an accurate picture of the disorders and abuses under which the Scottish people suffered during the reign of the last Stuarts.

The rigid doctrines of Calvinism, combined with the national spirit of independence, engendered feelings of bitterness which caused the people to revolt against every action of the government; while those in authority exercised their powers in so arbitrary and impolitic a fashion as to inflame this spirit to the uttermost. To compel men by the terrors of the law to break through their rigorous observance of the Sabbath, and to dance and make merry against their religious convictions, only confirmed the more rigid Presbyterians in their narrowmindedness and determination to oppose the government, while the younger men became discontented and unsettled, unable to resist the temptation of sharing in the military sports and exercises intended to promote a military spirit

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among them on the one hand, or to avoid listening to the threats and denunciations of the fanatic Covenanters on the other. The effect of these opposing influences on an earnest and thoughtful mind forms the leading interest of *Old Mortality*, and on that account we think the author intends Henry Morton to play the hero's part in the story. We are loth to admit this, however, as the spirited figure of Lord Evandale stands out with equal beauty in the picture of faithful love and generous rivalry, and their characters so act and react on each other, that they gain in interest from their very contrast.

Lord Evandale is probably the favourite with all young readers. There is an ardour and dashing gallantry about him which, combined with his unhappy fate, renders him peculiarly attractive, while Morton's restrained and serious nature wins on us more slowly, and it is not until the close of the story that we fully realise his heroic qualities.

The rivals make their appearance simultaneously at a shooting-match, and we see at once that the heart of fair Edith Bellenden is the real target at which they are aiming. Lord Evandale, the handsome and carefully decorated cavalier, rides in close attendance on Lady Margaret Bellenden and her beautiful granddaughter; but it is on the appearance of 'a slender young man simply attired, yet with a certain elegance and distinction, that Miss Bellenden shows confusion and embarrassment.'

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The two gallants acquit themselves equally in the first trial of skill, but as if to put his superiority beyond a doubt in the final contest, Morton vaults on his horse and brings down the popinjay at full gallop, a feat which Lord Evandale fails to accomplish, even though Morton courteously offers him his well-trained horse for the purpose. The young nobleman conceals his mortification with difficulty, and rides away moodily, while the applause of the crowd, which had originally been with him, is speedily transferred to his victorious rival. As Morton is led forward to be congratulated by the lord-lieutenant, he makes a profound salutation to Edith, who replies to her grandmother's inquiries about him with evident embarrassment. It transpires that he is the son of the late Colonel Milnwood, an officer of distinction, and, in spite of opposing politics, an old friend of Edith's uncle, Major Bellenden. It is at his house that the young people have met from time to time from childhood, and that the boy and girl friendship has developed almost imperceptibly into a warmer attachment, all unknown to Lady Margaret, whose staunch old Royalist spirit would have revolted from such an idea. Brought up by a miserly uncle, Morton has had little chance of mixing in society save that afforded him by the kindness of Major Bellenden, but he has had ample opportunities for observing the harshness and tyranny of the government, and the discontent and oppression of his countrymen.

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We read that Henry Morton possessed a force of character unknown to himself. From his father he inherited undaunted courage, and a detestation of injustice whether in politics or religion, but his enthusiasm was unsullied by fanaticism and un-leavened by the sourness of the puritanical spirit. From these his mind revolted, partly through the justice of his understanding and partly through his long visits at Major Bellenden's, where he had enjoyed the advantage of meeting many whose enlightened conversation taught him that goodness is not limited to any single form of religious doctrine. The parsimony of his uncle had deprived him of many educational advantages, and although he had made the utmost use of what he had, his soul was fettered by a sense of dependence and limitation which imparted a certain reserve and indifference to his manner often misinterpreted. This neutrality had its root in very praiseworthy motives, and arose from anything but coldheartedness. He had little in common with the objects of the present persecution, being disgusted by their gloomy fanaticism and the rancour of their political hatred, while his mind was still more revolted by the violence of the government and the license and brutality of the soldiers.

Condemning as he did the excesses on both sides, without the power to mitigate or relieve them, he would, ere the opening of the story, have left the country but for his love for Edith Bellenden, and the

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occasional opportunities afforded him of meeting her at her uncle's. As time went on, these meetings led to further interviews in their walks, which gradually assumed the appearance of appointments. Books and letters began to be exchanged, and each became tacitly aware of the feelings of the other. The superiority of Edith's position and the diffidence of young Morton's disposition, conspired to render him doubtful of her affection, and rumour having raised up a rival in Lord Evandale, whose birth, fortune, and politics made him a suitable candidate for her hand, the jealousy of Morton was often excited, especially as the visits of Lord Evandale at the Castle of Tillietudlem frequently interfered with the pre-arranged appointment of the lovers.

On his homeward ride from the Wappenshaw, he encounters the evil genius of his future career, John Burley, redhanded from the murder of Archbishop Sharpe; he appeals to him, as an old comrade of his father, to shelter him for the night, which he consents to do. At daybreak Burley departs, not, however, without having endeavoured to sow the seeds of rebellion in the young man's mind. Torn by conflicting emotions, and disheartened by the knowledge of the obstacles between himself and Edith, Morton hastens to his uncle and declares his intention of seeking his fortune as a soldier abroad. Old Milnwood raises every conceivable objection, and Morton relinquishes the scheme, not,

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perhaps, altogether sorry that fate compels him to remain in the neighbourhood of Tillietudlem. Towards evening, Cuddie Headrigg and his mother make their appearance, having been dismissed from Lady Margaret's estate for disobedience to her commands. Cuddie brings a note from Edith entreating Morton to befriend them, and he succeeds in inducing his uncle to give them temporary shelter. The arrival of the King's soldiers, and the arrest of Morton on suspicion of having connived at the escape of Burley, is quickly followed by his conveyance as a prisoner to Tillietudlem to await the coming of Claverhouse.

The spirited and saucy Jenny Dennison, Edith's attendant and the adored of Cuddie Headrigg, discovers the prisoner to be Morton, and reveals the fact to her mistress, whose love overpowers all false pride or feminine cowardice, and fired by the hope of saving him, she accompanies Jenny in disguise to the apartment in which he has been confined. Morton's rapture at this proof of her affection is chilled by the hopelessness of his position, and the sentry interrupts their interview before any plan for escape can be matured. Undaunted by this failure, Edith resolves to enlist the sympathy and assistance of her uncle, and despatches a note by night, entreating him to come to Tillietudlem, only betraying her real motive for writing in the postscript, to the astonishment of the innocent old soldier, who is completely taken in by this small piece of feminine strategy. The kind

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old man loses no time in obeying the summons, and his arrival is soon followed by that of Grahame of Claverhouse, whose handsome person and polished address contrast strangely with his formidable reputation.

The intercessions of Major Bellenden on behalf of his *protégé* make little impression on Colonel Grahame, his resentment against rebels being freshly excited by Lord Evandale's appearance in haste and disorder with the intelligence of a general rising of the Whigs and their encampment in the vicinity. Claverhouse gives orders for an immediate sally, and Lord Evandale, approaching Edith, addresses her in low tones of farewell. Simple and respectful as are his words, the agitated tenderness of his manner convinces her of the depth of his emotion, and she replies with the cordiality of true friendship, yet with no touch of a warmer feeling. In all her intercourse with the rival lovers, making allowance for the somewhat stilted language of the time, we must admire the modest yet courageous sincerity of her character, and the warmth of heart which ever struggles with her dignity and maidenly reserve. When she hears the stern words of Claverhouse as he orders Morton to be brought before him, her love overcomes all restraint, and she makes an agitated appeal to Lord Evandale to intercede in his behalf. He responds with the generosity of his noble nature: 'By Heaven, he shall not die, if *I* die in his place!' and Edith, carried away by her gratitude, is in the act of pouring out her

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thanks, when a deep sigh causes her to turn her head and to perceive that the object of her entreaties has just been led in, and has misinterpreted the meaning of her manner towards Lord Evandale. Morton's glance of reproach completes her distress and confusion, and reveals to Lord Evandale the existence of an understanding between them. He recognises the winner of the shooting match, and exclaims, 'I believe this is the young gentleman who gained the prize?' In her agitation Edith is for once tempted to equivocate: 'I am not sure; I rather think not,' she stammers. 'It *is* he,' Lord Evandale replies; adding, reproachfully, 'a victor ought to have interested you as a spectator more deeply.'

This moment makes a singular revolution in the character of Morton. The depth of despair to which both his love and fortunes are reduced, and what he imagines to be the change in Edith's affections, render her intercessions for him infinitely galling. These emotions conspire to arouse the dormant passions of his hitherto gentle nature, and, desperate himself, he determines to throw in his lot with his desperate countrymen. He answers Claverhouse's searching questions with a rash frankness most detrimental to his cause, astounding his friends by the recklessness of his behaviour. The intercessions of Lady Margaret and of Major Bellenden are powerless against his own temerity, when the sight of Edith well-nigh fainting from despair inspires Lord Evandale to make an urgent

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appeal in his favour, to the surprise of Claverhouse, whose quick eye has detected the ability and energy of Morton, and who recognises that such a man may prove a dangerous element in an opposing force.

No better testimony to the heroic qualities of Morton can be adduced than Claverhouse's own words. 'You see him,' he whispers; 'he is hovering on the verge between time and eternity, yet his is the only cheek unblenched, the only nerves not quivering.'

We venture to think that it is owing to Claverhouse's recognition and sympathy with this intrepidity of character, rather than to the intervention of Lord Evandale, that Morton's sentence is remitted, but he orders him to be brought along with the troops, accompanied by three other prisoners—Cuddie Headrigg, his mother, and a covenanting preacher—all of whom are suspected to be abettors of the rebels. The tragic excitement of the narrative is here relieved by the astonishing eloquence of Mause Headrigg and the droll humour of Cuddie, who from this point becomes the faithful follower of Henry Morton, and presents a delightful picture of Scotch cunning and devoted service.

In the ensuing fight, Lord Evandale again and again displays daring, courage, and readiness to risk his own life for that of others, but the fates are, on this occasion, dead against the Royalists. They are totally routed, and even he and the redoubtable Claverhouse forced to fly from the field. A stray

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shot strikes down the horse of the young nobleman, who has himself been wounded, and Morton, who has freed himself during the *mêlée*, springs forward to defend him from two of his pursuers—incited partly by natural generosity, and partly by a wish to requite the obligation which he had incurred in the morning. Recognising one of the pursuers to be the formidable Burley himself, he throws himself between him and Lord Evandale, reminding Burley that his own life had been endangered solely through the fact of his having sheltered him and assisted his escape, and boldly demanding the life of Evandale as a recompense.

Reluctantly the pitiless Puritan admits the justice of his argument, and, sheathing his bloody sword, he rides away, while Morton, catching a riderless charger, assists the cavalier to mount and gallop off in the direction of Tillietudlem. Events now succeed each other rapidly, and Morton, joining the insurgent forces, soon rises to a position of importance and command, the cooler heads of the party readily recognising his soldierly qualities. His motive for this step is the hope of restraining violence and of inducing the more moderate party to come to terms with the government. This very moderation wins him but little favour with the fanatics, who eye him with suspicion and distrust as a lukewarm ally; and on hearing that the castle of Tillietudlem is besieged, and the garrison almost starving, the old love reasserts itself above ambition and party spirit, and, quitting his

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command, he hastens to the camp of the besiegers. There he learns what a sturdy resistance has been made by Edith's valiant uncle, and the no less stout-hearted Lady Margaret, and to what desperate straits they are reduced, and his whole soul yearns to deliver them. He finds Lord Evandale a prisoner in the camp, and seeks an interview with him by night, at which Morton offers to send Lord Evandale back to the castle with a proposition that if the garrison will at once surrender, they shall have a safe-conduct to Edinburgh, where they can place themselves under the protection of the Duke of Monmouth, who has been appointed to the command of the Royalist troops.

It is with difficulty that Lord Evandale succeeds in inducing Major Bellenden to accept these terms, but seeing no alternative, he is compelled to do so, and the little troop ride sorrowfully and silently forth, escorted by a small guard of insurgent horsemen, while the flag of the rebels floats out from the Royalist fortress as they move away.

Lord Evandale, instead of placing himself by Edith's side, as might have been expected, betakes himself to the front, leaving that coveted place to one of the escort, whose dark cloak and flapping hat effectually conceal his features. The ensuing conversation between Edith and this horseman discloses his identity with her former lover, who endeavours to explain and justify the reasons for his late course

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of action, referring her to 'the honoured testimony of Lord Evandale' to bear witness to the sincerity of his motives. She listens in confused silence, and again misunderstanding her he turns haughtily away, after receiving the warmest thanks from Lord Evandale for the obligations he has conferred on the little band.

Through the vicissitudes of their adventurous and chequered career it is interesting to observe how these rivals both in love and war are gradually attracted by the recognition of the same heroic and generous attributes. Esteem gradually develops into confidence and friendship; and though remaining rivals to the last, it is on an almost brotherly affection that the curtain falls on the gallant deathbed of the one and the long-deferred happiness of the other.

Agnes Wickfield.

DAVID COPPERFIELD.

By CHARLES DICKENS.

*' Like calm midsummer cloud, nor less
Clothed with sweet light and silentness,
She in her gracious movement is :*

*' Noble withal, and free from fear
As heart of eagle, and high and near
To heaven in all her ways : of cheer*

*' Gentle and meek, from harshness free
As heart of dove : nor chideth she
Things ill, but knoweth not that they be :*

*' All clear as waters clean that run
Through shadow sweet and through sweet sun,
Her pure thoughts are : scorn hath she none.'*

OWEN MEREDITH.

Agnes Wickfield.

'I hope that real love and truth are stronger in the end than any evil or misfortune in the world.'

DAVID COPPERFIELD.

IF there is one characteristic which we can never fail to notice as common to all the heroines created by Charles Dickens, it is their pure womanliness. They are never particularly clever or amusing, seldom *piquante* or even light-hearted, but always gentle, and home-loving, and patiently enduring. Their characters do not seem to change or develop with time, to be moulded by circumstances, by sorrow, or by love, as is the case with Thackeray's Ethel Newcome and Laura Pendennis. Like some fair and delicate flowers, they seem to open and expand at once, blooming generally in shade rather than in sunshine, lighting up the dark places of the earth with their quiet radiance, and protecting—rather than protected by—fathers, brothers, and lovers, to whom they might naturally have looked for support.

Think of 'Little Dorrit' amidst the squalid surroundings of the Marshalsea prison, growing up in that twilight atmosphere of dim disgrace, but always honest and true—the faithful daughter and the

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constant friend. Or follow the fortunes of little Nell through her wandering life to her pathetic death—a lovely poem from beginning to end; while in Florence Dombey we see the same sweet grace, the same kind of protecting love for little Paul which Nell lavished on her childish and childlike grandfather, we see the ‘grown-up angel,’ as Jeffrey styled her, but endowed at the same time with a dash of spirit—a touch of self-dependence and heroism which adds strength and freshness to the softer qualities of her character. And Esther Summerson, where could we find a more complete impersonation of that real goodness which can overcome evil instead of shrinking from it? True, she is often voted a female prig, but it must naturally be difficult for any one to write their own autobiography or paint their own portrait without exaggeration on the one hand, or false humility on the other; and we cannot help wishing that the great author of *Bleak House* had seen his way to telling Esther’s story for her, and so, by avoiding the said imputation of priggishness, had presented the quiet beauty of her character in its true light—always surrounded by natures far inferior to her own, and always bringing out their best qualities by her loving touch and softening the worst by those ‘deeds of week-day holiness’ which make up the daily record of her life.

Even in Dickens’s minor female characters—in the bright, impulsive, not over-wise Dot of the *Cricket*

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on the *Hearth*; in the sensible Milly, the saviour of the *Haunted Man*; in the mingled foolishness and magnanimity of the 'child-wife,' and in the brave, enduring reticence of Annie Strong (both in *David Copperfield*)—we can invariably trace the same sweet, womanly nature.

But it is in the character of Agnes Wickfield that Charles Dickens has touched the height of his ideal of womanhood; of all his books, *David Copperfield*, as he has told us himself, was the favourite 'child of his fancy,' and in its heroine we have the full realisation of that which he always conceived to be woman's mission—to lead men higher, to 'point upward,' to strengthen and to guide. In Agnes he has painted for us a perfectly unselfish character living day by day in the lives of others, but accustomed from childhood to a certain self-restraint, which enables her the better to conceal the one attachment of her life under the modest veil of true sisterly affection, to be for years as an adopted sister to the man whom in the secret shrine of her pure heart she worshipped as a lover.

No description of Agnes in outward form or feature is given to us in any part of the book; we only see the soul shining through the face with a noble purity in keeping with her name; we see her not clever or brilliant, but quietly and silently self-reliant—'strong in grave peace, in pity circumspect;' perfect in modesty and dignity—true woman, true daughter, true sister.

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Perhaps we may secretly wish that the object of her love had been more worthy of her, that he had been endowed with force of character himself instead of leaning so much upon hers ; but at least he had the virtue of having preserved through all the vicissitudes of his career the same unvarying attachment to her as his good angel. It has been well said, that ‘many mortals hold half their rectitude in the mind of the being they love best ;’ and something of this feeling is always present with us as we follow the fortunes of David Copperfield. Blindly he groped after the great happiness of his life ; but, when his eyes were opened, at least he knew how to value the treasure which had been his, unawares, so long.

Those who are well acquainted with Dickens’s great story will remember that Agnes Wickfield does not appear very often or very prominently in its pages. Rather, her calm presence is like a golden background against which the other characters are shown up, and from which they seem to receive a kind of reflected light. She is first introduced to us by her father as his little housekeeper, on that memorable day when Betsy Trotwood seeks the advice of her old friend and lawyer, Mr. Wickfield, and, at the same time, finds a home for her nephew where she least expected it. There, in the old oak-panelled house, with its quaint rooms and snug corners, we see the child Agnes for the first time, with her little basket-trifle, containing her keys, hanging at her side, calm even then and

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watchful of her father, and, later on, encouraging Trotwood in his school life, nursing him after his boyish fights, and taking her place always as his sister.

It is thus that the hero of the book describes his first impression of her, and it is the keynote of the whole story :—

‘I cannot call to mind where or when, in my childhood, I had seen a stained-glass window in a church. Nor do I recollect its subject. But I know that when I saw her turn round, in the grave light of the old staircase, and wait for us above, I thought of that window ; and that I associated something of its tranquil brightness with Agnes Wickfield ever afterwards.’

The scene in which Agnes first confides to her adopted brother her anxiety about her father, with its beautiful mingling of daughterly compassion and daughterly pride, is only equalled (though perhaps surpassed) by the inimitable description of the tea-party at which Agnes first becomes acquainted with Dora, the child-wife that is to be :—

‘Dora was afraid of Agnes.’ (It is David Copperfield who speaks.) ‘She had told me that she knew Agnes was “too clever.” But when she saw her looking at once so cheerful and so earnest, and so thoughtful and so good, she gave a faint little cry of pleased surprise, and just put her affectionate arms round Agnes’s neck, and laid her innocent cheek against her face.

‘I never was so happy, I never was so pleased as when

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I saw those two sit down together, side by side ; as when I saw my little darling looking up so naturally to those cordial eyes ; as when I saw the tender and beautiful regard which Agnes cast upon her. . . .

‘Never, never, had I loved Dora so deeply and truly as I loved her that night. When we had again alighted, and were walking in the starlight along the quiet road that led to the doctor’s house, I told Agnes it was her doing.

“When you were sitting by her,” said I, “you seemed to be no less *her* guardian angel than mine ; and you seem so now, Agnes.” “A poor angel,” she returned, “but faithful.” . . .

‘I glanced at the serene face looking upward, and thought it was the stars that made it seem so noble.’

We who know Agnes’s secret know that it was not the stars, but the light of a faithful, silent, unselfish love that ennobled that countenance and made it holy ; we know that she had learnt to rejoice without one shade of envy in the happiness that was not for her, albeit she enhanced it by her loyal and generous sympathy. And though the critics may sneer at her ‘too unfailing wisdom and self-sacrificing goodness’ (Forster’s *Life of Charles Dickens*), who can tell what hidden struggles may have shaken the depths of that apparently quiet nature ere this lovely serenity was attained ?

Indeed, there are many indications, especially in the later chapters of the story, to show that the inner life of this fair soul was far from being an untroubled one ; that the sorrows of the burdened heart must

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often have been wept out unseen before the brow could appear unclouded to the eyes of men ; that the sacrifice of self may often have been rehearsed and the rebellious hopes schooled in secret, ere the outward result was perfectly attained.

That it *was* attained was enough for the object of her half-unconscious devotion. Her own trials made her all the more fitted to be his constant, though often invisible, guide and counsellor, ever ‘pointing upward,’ ever expecting him to be at his best and so inducing him to do his best—all her simple creed contained in her own words : ‘Remember that I confide in simple love and truth at last’—all her influence summed up in the spirit of the letter which reached him in a foreign land after his great sorrow, and brought him back to life, and hope, and joy :—

‘She gave me no advice ; she urged no duty on me ; she only told me, in her own fervent manner, what her trust in me was. She knew (she said) how such a nature as mine would turn affliction to good. She knew how trial and emotion would exalt and strengthen it. She was sure that in my every purpose I should gain a firmer and a higher tendency, through the grief I had undergone. She, who so gloried in my fame and so looked forward to its augmentation, well knew that I would labour on. She knew that in me, sorrow could not be weakness, but must be strength. As the endurance of my childish days had done its part to make me what I was, so greater calamities would nerve me on, to be yet better than I was ; and so, as they had taught me, would I teach others. She commended me to God,

Agnes Wickfield.

Who had taken my innocent darling to His rest ; and in her sisterly affection cherished me always, and was always at my side go where I would ; proud of what I had done, but infinitely prouder yet of what I was reserved to do.'

What a different world it would be if woman, like England, *expected every man to do his duty.*

Sydney Carton.

A TALE OF TWO CITIES.

By CHARLES DICKENS.

‘Its portrayal of the noble-natured castaway makes the Tale of Two Cities almost a peerless book in modern literature, and gives it a place among the highest examples of literary art. The conception of this character shows in its author an ideal of magnanimity and of charity unsurpassed. There is not a grander, lovelier figure than the self-wrecked, self-devoted Sydney Carton, in literature or history.’—GRANT WHITE.

Sydney Carton.

*'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his
life for his friends.'*

THE *Tale of Two Cities*, in which Sydney Carton appears, differs from most other works of Dickens in having a clear and definite story, which is worked out more artistically than most of his plots, and the issue of which is dependent upon the development of the character of this one man out of worthlessness into heroism. In most of his stories, except perhaps in *Great Expectations*, Dickens's characters can hardly be said to develop at all. David Copperfield is the same mild, inane youth and man, as he was a mild and inane little boy; Nicholas Nickleby and Oliver Twist are lay figures, and Mr. Jarndyce, who may be called the hero of *Bleak House*, is amiable enough, but with no salt of common sense to flavour his amiability. But Sydney Carton is different from these. He is not the hero who marries the heroine, but he is the hero in a truer sense, because his work in the story is to be the deliverer and champion, who gives without receiving for himself, and makes the happy termination of the tragedy possible by his own sacrifice.

When we first come across Sydney Carton, he is a

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clever, dissipated young barrister, who has fallen into evil ways apparently beyond restoration, and has to support himself by taking work for a pompous and prosperous counsel—a former schoolfellow of his—whose cases he gets up with such skill and acuteness that Stryver gets fame and reputation, while no one hears of Sydney Carton. It falls to Stryver's lot to defend the conventional hero of the tale, Charles St. Evrémond, who is known in England by the name of Darnay, from a charge of high treason as a French spy plotting against the English Government. Things are going greatly against the prisoner, when Carton, who has apparently been looking at the ceiling of the court all through the trial, sends a note to Stryver, suggesting that he should call attention to a striking likeness of features which he sees to exist between the prisoner and himself, to prove the possibility of a mistake in the evidence. This gets Darnay off, and he is acquitted, though it has always appeared to me that Dickens ought to have explained how Carton came to be so familiar with his own face, being, as he was, very negligent and dilapidated in his dress, and by no means given to the contemplation of himself in a mirror. At the trial a young French girl, a fellow-traveller of Darnay, by name Lucie Manette, has to give damaging evidence against him, and faints at the end, when Carton calls attention to her condition and sees that she is helped out of court. It is from this time onward evident that Charles Darnay and Lucie

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Manette are to be the lovers of the tale, and also that Sydney Carton has fallen in love—love which he knows to be hopeless, from his own unworthy character and circumstances—with the same young girl as the man whose life he has thus saved.

Sydney Carton up to this time has acquiesced in his own degradation, and his love for Lucie does not at once make him another man. It shows him up, however, to himself. He never makes love to Lucie, whose heart is from the first bespoken by Darnay, but it is the first time that the influence of a good woman has touched him, and her gentle considerateness towards him makes his hopeless love turn to good and not evil. On the night before she marries Darnay he asks for an interview with her, which is thus told:—

‘He leaned an elbow on her table and covered his eyes with his hand. He knew her to be distressed, without looking at her, and said,—

“Pray forgive me, Miss Manette. I break down before the knowledge of what I want to say to you. Will you hear me?”

“If it will do you any good, Mr. Carton, if it would make you happier, it would make me very glad.”

“God bless you for your sweet compassion.”

‘He unshaded his face after a little while, and spoke steadily.

“If it had been possible, Miss Manette, that you could have returned the love of the man you see before you—self flung away, wasted, drunken, poor creature of misuse as you

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know him to be—he would have been conscious this day and hour, in spite of his happiness, that he would bring you to misery, bring you to sorrow and repentance, blight you, disgrace you, pull you down with him. I know very well that you can have no tenderness for me, I ask for none; I am even thankful that it cannot be.”

Lucie tries to inspire in him energy for better things, but his self-despair cannot be alleviated. At last he says:—

““It is useless to say this, I know; but it rises out of my soul. For you or for any dear to you I would do anything. If my career were of that better kind that there was any opportunity of sacrifice in it, I would embrace any sacrifice for you and those dear to you. Try to hold me in your mind at some quiet times, as ardent and sincere in this one thing; . . . think now and then that there is a man who would give his life to keep a life you love beside you.””

Lucie marries Charles Darnay; their life goes on smoothly for several years, during which Sydney Carton remains, at his own request to Darnay, so far an intimate friend of the family, that he comes in now and then—not very often—to spend the evening without invitation. Sydney is, we feel, gradually lifted and purified in character by the fact that he has proved himself capable of a pure and unselfish love for a good woman, and Lucie's children learn to love him dearly. But he does not regain his lost place in the world.

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Seven or eight years later the Revolution breaks out, and Darnay, who has left his French property in charge of an old steward, is recalled to France by a letter from the old man to say that he is in danger of death from the Republicans. Darnay goes to try to save him, and is himself imprisoned. Lucie and her father come to Paris to be near him, and Dr. Manette, who has been a Bastille prisoner, after a long time of waiting, once gets him set free. But owing to a chain of circumstances too long to tell here, he is quickly retaken, and this time Manette can do nothing for him, while the fierce hereditary enemies of his house are anxious to hunt down not him only, but his wife and child. It is at this juncture that Sydney Carton turns up in Paris, to see what he can do to help the Darnays in their trouble.

Fortune favours him. He comes across a certain good-for-nothing Englishman, whose employment in life has been that of a Government spy before the Revolution, partly in England, partly in France. His present employment is that of turnkey in the Conciergerie prison, where Darnay is confined. Sydney Carton lets him know that if he made public the fact of his past as a Government spy, the mob would tear him to pieces. Having this hold upon him, it is plain that the turnkey will allow him to do anything which does not bring risk upon himself. We are not told in so many words, but we are made to guess the

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resolution which Sydney Carton—so like in features to Charles Darnay that the likeness had already saved Darnay's life—has taken to save him.

He makes his arrangements for the morrow so that it should be possible to carry out this resolution.

“There is nothing more to do,” said he, glancing up at the moon, “until to-morrow. I can't sleep.”

‘It was not a reckless manner, the manner in which he said these words aloud under the fast-sailing clouds, nor was it more expressive of negligence than defiance. It was the settled manner of a tired man, who had wandered and struggled and got lost, but who at length struck into his road, and saw its end.

‘Long ago, when he had been famous among his earliest competitors as a youth of great promise, he had followed his father to the grave. His mother had died years before. These solemn words, which had been read at his father's grave, arose in his mind as he went down the dark streets, among the heavy shadows, with the moon and the clouds sailing on high above him: “I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth on Me shall never die.” . . .

‘Now that the streets were quiet and the night wore on, the words were in the echoes of his feet and were in the air. Perfectly calm and steady, he sometimes repeated them to himself as he walked; but he heard them always. . . . The strong tide, so deep, so swift, so certain, was like a congenial friend in the morning stillness. He walked by the stream, far from the houses, and in the light and warmth of the sun fell asleep on the bank. When he awoke and was

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afloat again he lingered there yet a little longer, watching an eddy that turned and turned purposeless, until the stream absorbed it and carried it on to the sea. "Like me!"

'A trading boat, with a sail of the softened colour of a dead leaf, then glided into his view, floated by him, and died away. As its silent track in the water disappeared, the prayer that had broken up out of his heart for a merciful consideration of all his poor blindnesses and errors ended in the words, "I am the resurrection and the life."'

The day thus begun sees Charles Darnay condemned to the guillotine by a wave of popular fury for a terrible family crime committed by his father and uncle. Lucie bears up bravely till she has said good-bye to her husband, but as he goes out she falls into a deep swoon. Sydney Carton takes her up, and helps to get her home, still unconscious.

"Oh! Carton, Carton, dear Carton!" cried little Lucie, springing up and throwing her arms passionately round him in a burst of grief. "Now that you have come, I think you will do something to help mamma, to save papa. Oh! look at her, dear Carton! Can you, of all the people who love her, bear to see her so?"

'He bent over the child and laid her blooming cheek against his face. He put her gently from him and looked at her unconscious mother.

"Before I go," he said, and paused, "I may kiss her?"

'It was remembered afterwards that when he bent down and touched her face with his lips he murmured some words. The child, who was nearest to him, told them afterwards,

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and told her grandchildren, when she was a handsome old lady, that she heard him say, "A life you love."

Carton carries out his resolution. Armed with something which must have had the properties of chloroform, before chloroform was discovered, he makes the turnkey admit him to Darnay's prison, drugs him, gets him into his own coat and cravat, sends him out insensible, and remains in his place. Charles Darnay—still insensible—and his family are got out of Paris in a coach, Charles Darnay passing as Sydney Carton, and Sydney Carton waits for his death—a very short time he has to wait—in the prison. As he gets into the tumbril he is recognised as—or rather recognised not to be—Darnay by a little sempstress, one of Darnay's fellow-prisoners, to whom he had been kind. They are taken together to the place of execution.

'The supposed Evrémond descends from the tumbril, and the sempstress is lifted out next after him. He has not relinquished her patient hand in getting out, but still holds it as he promised. He gently places her with her back to the crashing engine that constantly whirrs up and falls, and she looks into his face and thanks him.

"But for you, dear stranger, I should not be so composed, for I am naturally a poor little thing, faint of heart; nor should I have been able to raise my thoughts to Him Who was put to death that we might have hope and comfort here to-day. I think you were sent me by Heaven."

Sydney Carton.

“Or you to me,” says Sydney Carton. “Keep your eyes upon me, dear child, and mind no other object.”

“I mind nothing while I hold your hand. I shall mind nothing when I let it go if they are rapid.”

“They will be rapid. Fear not.”

‘The two stand in the fast-thinning throng of victims, but they speak as if they were alone. Eye to eye, voice to voice, hand to hand, heart to heart, these two children of the Universal Mother, else so wide apart and differing, have come together on the dark highway, to repair home together and to rest in her bosom.

“Brave and generous friend, will you just let me ask you one last question? I am very ignorant, and it troubles me a little. . . . I have a cousin, an only relative and an orphan like myself, whom I love very dearly. What I have been thinking as I came along, and what I am still thinking now, as I look into your kind, strong face, which gives me so much support, is this:—If the Republic really does good to the poor, and they come to be less hungry and in all ways to suffer less, she may live a long time; she may even live to be old.”

“What then, my gentle sister?”

“Do you think”—the uncomplaining eyes in which there is so much endurance fill with tears, and the lips part a little more and tremble—“that it will seem long to me while I wait for her in the better land, where I trust both you and I will be mercifully sheltered?”

“It cannot be, my child; there is no time there, and no trouble there.”

“You comfort me so much. I am so ignorant. Am I to kiss you now? Is the moment come?”

“Yes.”

‘She kisses his lips, he kisses hers; they solemnly bless

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each other. The spare hand does not tremble as he releases it; nothing worse than a sweet, bright constancy is in the patient face. She goes next before him—is gone; the knitting women count Twenty-Two.

“I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord; he that believeth on Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whoso liveth and believeth on Me shall never die.”

‘The murmuring of many voices, the upturning of many faces, the pressing on of many footsteps in the outskirts of the crowd, so that it swells forward in a mass, like one great heave of water, all flashes away. Twenty-Three.’

Shirley.

SHIRLEY.

By CHARLOTTE BRONTË.

'My sister Emily first declined. . . . Day by day, when I saw with what a front she met suffering, I looked on her with an anguish of wonder and love. I have seen nothing like it; but, indeed, I have never seen her parallel in anything. Stronger than a man, simpler than a child, her nature stood alone. . . .

'I shall bend as my powers tend. The loss of what we possess nearest and dearest to us in this world produces an effect upon the character; we search out what we have left that can support, and when found we cling to it with a hold of new-strung tenacity. The faculty of imagination lifted me when I was sinking, three months ago; its active exercise has kept my head above water since; its results cheer me now, for I feel they have enabled me to give pleasure to others. I am thankful to God who gave me the faculty, and it is to me a part of my religion to defend this gift and to profit by its possession.'—Letter of C. BRONTË.

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*' Stern daughter of the Voice of God !
O Duty ! if that name thou love,
Who art a light to guide, a rod
To check the erring and reprove ;
Thou who art victory and law,
When empty terrors overawe,
From vain temptations dost set free,
And calm'st the weary strife of frail humanity !'*

WORDSWORTH—' *Ode to Duty.*'

THERE are, I suppose, few readers of fiction who do not in some degree form to themselves an idea of the personality of the author whose thoughts they are sharing, and into whose views of life they are entering, as they follow the development of character or sequence of circumstances set forth in his work. For our minds have strata like the earth, and to *know* a fellow-creature is to sink a shaft down below the superficial outside self of mere acquaintance. A book gives us the ore dug up from below the surface of the writer's mind ; we find in it the inmost thoughts which in years of acquaintance and even of friendship would never have been confided to us. Perhaps the measure in which the author's personality impresses itself upon the reader may even to some extent be the measure of his genius, some indication at least of its force and genuineness. Whether this be so or

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not, however, it is certain that the books that set us thinking, that exercise a formative influence upon our own minds, will generally be those in which we have not merely become interested in the doings of the characters, but have been conscious of the author's voice speaking to us through them. We have made a new acquaintance, perhaps a new friend, whose conversation has either revealed to us new possibilities of life and hope, and joy and duty, or else has turned up the seamy side of life ; has made us ashamed of ourselves and of humanity ; has turned a search-light upon the dark places of the world and of our hearts, and has sent us away haunted with new fears, or gifted with a new knowledge of good and evil that makes us suspicious rather than wise.

As is the author, so is his book. From the vine nurtured in soft southern air, in glowing days and warm nights, full of scent and song, we may pluck sweet grapes ; from the bramble of the north, growing sturdily in east wind and sleet, frozen in cold creeping fog of starless nights, scorched by brief hot sunshine through which the wind still blows keen, we shall gather its fit fruit, with a keenness of flavour, even in its ripeness, that brings before us in a moment a vision of the purple moorland over which cloud shadows flit and wild birds skim in the brief, bright, autumn day.

The stern, barren north was Charlotte Brontë's home, where hard rock and stiff heather cover the soil, and warm hearts hide under a cold, rude manner ;

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where man must wrestle with Nature to win aught from her, and those who seek to know and sympathise with their fellows must not allow their hearts to be chilled by apparent indifference or even repulse. And her life-pathway led her but seldom in green pastures or by still waters. Only in the short nine months of her married life, begun when she was eight-and-thirty, could the few friends who loved her feel that at last her sorely tried spirit was tasting the cup of happiness. Then death snatched it from her lips. So goes the earthly phrase. Shall we not rather say that the soul that had been tried and tempered by much sorrow was for a short space tuned to joy on earth before the gate of everlasting happiness was opened to her ?

Left motherless when quite a young child, after the quiet parsonage-house had already been saddened for a year or two by the mother's last illness, Charlotte Brontë found herself soon called by the early deaths of her two elder sisters to become sister and mother in one to the two remaining sisters, Emily and Anne, known since to the world as authors of *Wuthering Heights* and *Agnes Grey*, and to the one brother whose miserable life-story darkened his sisters' lives, and hastened the early deaths of Emily and Anne. The father lived strangely apart from his children. His health was never good ; Charlotte herself was often ill ; means were small, and altogether the unhealthy stone-floored house in the Yorkshire village of Haworth, surrounded by a graveyard, damp in itself,

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and set on a height which in winter nights seemed to be a playground or battlefield for the four winds of heaven, seemed a place where Sorrow had taken up a lasting abode.

Hither it was that Imagination came as healer and consoler. First three sisters, then two, then *one* in the agony of her solitude sought refuge from the pain of the Actual in the realms of romance. Excepting the time passed by two of the sisters in studying at Brussels—which gave to the world the story of *Villette*—and short engagements as governess in different families, with the addition of a few visits paid when fame had come to her, all Charlotte Brontë's life was spent in the solitude of Haworth. Why?

Because Duty required it; duty, the key-note of life to all that family except the brother, whose wasted life and miserable end seemed to stand as an awful warning of the result of the opposite course. Never once does it seem to have occurred to Mr. Brontë to give up his charge in a place which so severely tried the health of his family. Never even when the whole reading public cried out for more of her work, and the publisher grew importunate, did Charlotte allow the exercise of her powers to take the first place in her life. The care of her father, the duties of the house, the charge of a very old woman, the faithful servant who had nursed the sisters as children, these and all other claims upon the woman must be satisfied before the author might utter the thoughts that craved for words.

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Naturally, then, in all her writing sounds the wail of the cramped spirit born for freer, sunnier life, beating itself against the bars of circumstance, and, like a bird of wild race bred in captivity, pining for liberty, yet unable to shape to itself a clear vision of the liberty it seeks.

Loneliness and captivity. 'I had no place to flee unto, and no man cared for my soul.' 'No man.' Few men or women in her day had begun even to look in the face of those problems of women's lives which our generation both confesses and seeks to solve—the problems which in *Shirley* we see agitating the mind, and even undermining the health of Caroline Helstone, when caught in their toils. Through this book also, as in all her writings, sounds a cry, a longing, to which in her actual life Charlotte Brontë gave little voice, the passionate longing for love. She made few friends; three offers of marriage she refused; the fourth, which she herself desired to accept, was for some time, until her father's mood changed, steadily put aside for his sake. But all her heroines are hungry and thirsty for love, not only for the love of lovers, but that of friends also. Had she written another book when her own heart had found rest in the tender, protecting affection of her husband, we may feel sure that it would have been free from the ring of bitterness which pervades all her work, and, we cannot but feel, detracts from its perfection. In *Shirley*, while some of the characters are described with all tenderness and pathos, the petty

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follies and meannesses of others are set forth with a fierce bitterness that seems almost vindictive, as though no good-humoured smile had ever played about the lips of the observer of human nature.

To one who had so incessantly faced the stern realities of life mere external beauty and grace seemed a poor varnish, and, unless the soul within were fair also, a perilous whitening of the sepulchre. Frequently, therefore, she preferred to divest her heroes and heroines of outward charm, and to show her ideal manhood as the ugly Rochester of *Jane Eyre*, or the little Professor of *Villette*, or the stern, almost harsh, Robert Moore of *Shirley*, and her heroine as the poor plain governess who claims to be a woman and a sister for that she also can taste of Love and Sorrow, the true emblems of the soul, the true makers of beauty. 'True indeed!' said the world that bowed before her genius, and the plain woman had her vogue in fiction, though it must be owned that half-way through a book the story-teller often repented, and slyly gifted his heroine with beauty discernible at least to the eye of her lover. *Strength* is the main attribute of Charlotte Brontë's heroes. The ideal man must be an oak round which the frail plant may clasp its tendrils, the falconer to whose hand the shy wild bird comes at last a willing captive—too willing, we can hardly help feeling, in the case of Caroline Helstone and Robert Moore. Caroline is a timid, affectionate, simple girl, who divides the *rôle* of heroine with Shirley Keeldar,

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and upon whose life presses so heavily the unconscious tyranny, so heavy because so unconscious, of her uncle, the Yorkshire parson, of a nature which the author knew through and through. The minor characters in this book, so vividly drawn that as we read we seem to make actual personal acquaintance with them, were indeed portraits from the life, and excited some wrath and more amusement when at last the veil of anonymity was lifted from the identity of 'Curren Beli.'

The character of Shirley Keeldar, the young and beautiful heiress, who is so lovingly depicted, was drawn also from life, and from the character of one most dear to the author, her sister, Emily: Emily Brontë as she would have been, had grinding poverty and ceaseless sorrow taken their iron pressure from off her spirit. The almost passionate delight in freedom, freedom of body in the keen air of the moors, freedom of soul on an open path in life, the intense affection for animals, the studious mind, the gentleness and resoluteness combined, all these were characteristic of Emily, the 'spirit apart' whom her sister describes once more in the words which preface this paper. The incident of her kindness to the stray dog, which repaid her by a bite, and her courageous cauterisation of the wound, her treatment of the dog, Keeper, and other vivid little incidents of the story, are taken from Emily's actual life.

None can fail to love the brilliant yet lovable Shirley, and Caroline Helstone sees her cousin's

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affections drawn away from herself—for a short time only, and her lonely hours and sad musings on the problems of girl-life give us the author's own meditations on the pressing questions in words not without meaning to our own generation :—

‘Nobody in particular is to blame, that I can see, for the state in which things are, and I cannot tell, however much I puzzle over it, how they are to be altered for the better, but I feel that there is something wrong somewhere. I believe single women should have more to do—better chances of interesting and profitable occupation than they possess now. Look at the numerous families of girls in this neighbourhood. The brothers of these girls are every one in business or professions; they have something to do : their sisters have no earthly employment but household work and sewing, no earthly pleasure but an unprofitable visiting, and no hope in all their life to come of anything better. This stagnant state of things makes them decline in health, they are never well, and their minds and views shrink to wondrous narrowness. The great wish, the sole aim, of every one of them is to be married; but the majority will never marry, they will die as they now live. Men of England! look at your poor girls, many of them fading around, dropping off into consumption and decline; or, what is worse, degenerating to sour old maids—envious, back-biting, wretched, because life is a desert to them; or, what is worst of all, reduced to strive, by scarce modest coquetry and degrading artifice, to gain that position and consideration by marriage which to celibacy is denied.’

The fuller, wider life, for which Caroline Helstone

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sighed as making maidenhood happy and contented, is represented as possible in that generation to Shirley Keeldar only because of her accidental circumstances of wealth and independence. She is painted for us as gracious and modest and maidenly, yet fearless and truthful, venturing to face social problems, and able to defend her convictions when attacked, or to silence talk unfit for her presence, or, again, to resist impudent demands upon her ready charity. Wealth and rank in the person of Sir Philip Nunneby fail to tempt her to a marriage which is not dictated by affection ; of her own free will the high-spirited heiress lays her hand with her heart in it in that of her brother's tutor, Louis Moore, whom she loves because she can look up to him. In Louis Moore's portrait we can hardly feel that our author has scored a success ; he is but a shadowy figure, and we must be content to take his worth for granted, since Shirley feels him worthy of her. Caroline binds her fate on the same principle to Robert Moore's, for Charlotte Brontë's heroines are fain to be the moth rather than the star, and glory in submission and captivity so soon as the worthy lord is found. With this ideal we may quarrel if we please.

There is much in its depiction in *Shirley* that cannot fail to please, and much also that we may do well to ponder over. However much we may disagree, we cannot feel indifferent, either to the characters drawn for us so vividly, or to the writer whose personality grows familiar to us as we read, the woman

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so faithful to duty, both in daily life and in the use of her literary gift. Seen in the light of her life, the flavour of bitterness in the book is explained and forgiven, however much regretted, remembering that her utter truthfulness bade her depict men and women as she had known them, and not creatures from the fairy-land of imagination. Her experience of life had been hard; her work is its outcome. No golden halo is thrown over her hard reality, but neither is any bewildering mist thrown round evil that it may seem fair and good.

‘It is possible,’ writes an able critic, Charlotte’s biographer and friend, Mrs. Gaskell, speaking of the work of all three sisters, ‘that it would have been better to have described only good and pleasant people, doing good and pleasant things (in which case they could hardly have written at any time). All I can say is that never, I believe, did women possessed of such wonderful gifts exercise them with a fuller feeling of responsibility for their use.’

They rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.

Adam Bede.

ADAM BEDE

By GEORGE ELIOT.

'I would not, even if I had the choice, be the clever novelist who could create a world so much better than this, in which we get up in the morning to do our daily work, that you would be likely to turn a harder, colder eye on the dusty streets and the common green fields—on the real breathing men and women, who can be chilled by your indifference or injured by your prejudice; who can be cheered and helped onward by your fellow-feeling, your forbearance, your outspoken, brave justice. So I am content to tell my simple story, without trying to make things seem better than they were; dreading nothing, indeed, but falsity, which, in spite of one's best efforts, there is reason to dread. Falsehood is so easy, truth so difficult.'—GEORGE ELIOT.

Adam Bede.

'All true work is sacred; in all true work, were it but true hand labour, there is something of divineness.'

CARLYLE.

GREAT fiction may be roughly divided into four classes, in which the interest is primarily concentrated :

1. On the events of the story : as Defoe, Wilkie Collins.

2. On the surface and slighter details of life ; on feeling in its less powerful and more usual forms : as Sheridan, Miss Austen.

3. On the ideal and often picturesque setting forth of scenery, events, and characters : as Sir Walter Scott, Dickens.

4. On the study of character for its own sake ; especially with regard to its moral or spiritual development : as Shakspeare, Thackeray, Shorthouse.

These classes may often overlap each other, or stray into each other's territories, the writer who thinks first of the construction of his plot often giving us bits of wonderful characterisation or ideal description ; but, taken as a whole, each class portrays life from a different point of view, drawing from it different kinds of pleasure and instruction.

The fourth class is the highest and most comprehensive. It acknowledges the importance of events

Adam Bede.

and externals, ideal as well as realistic truth ; it even borrows the styles of writing of the previous classes, when necessary to a clearer setting forth of its own meaning, as, for instance, in,— 1. *The Merchant of Venice*. 2. *A Shabby Genteel Story* (Thackeray). 3. *John Inglesant*. To produce good work in this class requires great gifts and rare experience ; wide sympathy, the insight of a poet, the faculty of observation, and the unerring logic of a scientist, together with a personal knowledge of, as well as the power of depicting, strong feeling and a wide variety of men, minds, and manners. The characters these writers create appear to them as personalities, influenced by circumstances, but distinct from them, and finding success or failure in spiritual rather than worldly life.

George Eliot is a writer of the fourth class. Keeping closer to actual life than Shorthouse, less powerful and fuller of, often unnecessary, detail than Shakspeare, she yet shares with both a clear vision of the fact that our deeds, mental and actual, mould our spiritual and worldly destiny, while she reiterates throughout her works her own message to mankind—our responsibility to do good by deed and example, and thus to leave the world better than we find it.

One of the most perfect of her novels in style, and the distribution and balance of its parts, is *Adam Bede*. All art has its technical side, the artificial means of arranging its matter so as best to display itself to the public, and George Eliot has used them

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with a master hand. First we have a background, showing us English country life at the beginning of the century, which might well serve as a commentary on the pictures of that time, at the close of which she herself was born. We see the simpler, harder life of all classes, their closer union, the dignity and ceremony which belonged to special occasions, the greater leisure and slower movement of existence, the difficulty of travel; the very dresses and furniture are brought before us, till we cry, 'This is a Morland; this a Westall engraving; and here a portrait of Gainsborough!' To this background belong the secondary characters — Bartle Massey, Mrs. Irwine, Squire Donnithorne, and the Poysers; they supply the real life and its surroundings, needed from the author's desire to connect the chief characters which are drawn mostly from the point of view of soul life and development, as closely as possible with actual existence. The secondary characters also serve to give brightness and the sorely needed touch of humour which relieves the tragedy. Many of them are made out with wonderful sympathy and keenness of observation, as Mrs. Irwine and Mrs. Poyser, but they are carefully kept from absorbing the interest which does not belong to them; those of the Hall and Rectory have most to do with Arthur Donnithorne, those of farm and village with Adam Bede, Dinah, and Hetty.

These four central figures and their attendant groups are carefully contrasted, illuminating and

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explaining each other by their very unlikeness, contrast being one of the most valuable methods of setting forth things literary and artistic.

Adam Bede, the hero, is a young carpenter, who is dominated by an intellectual passion for his work, as an artist is by his art; this great force pervades his life, spiritual and practical. He says:—

“I know a man must have the love o’ God in his soul, and the Bible’s God’s Word, but what does the Bible say? Why, it says as God put His sperrit into the workman as built the tabernacle, to make him do all the carved work and things as wanted a nice hand, and this is my way o’ looking at it: there’s the sperrit o’ God in all things and all times—weekday as well as Sunday—and i’ the great works and inventions, and the figuring and mechanics. And God helps us with our headpieces and our hands as well as with our souls.”

To Adam his trade has a dignity and beauty of its own; he cannot bear to see others slight it by leaving work the moment the clock strikes, as though they were afraid of doing a stroke too much. To his ears the distant sound of tools is

‘like the tentative sounds of the orchestra to the violinist who has to bear his part in the overture; the strong fibres begin their accustomed thrill, and what was a moment before joy, vexation, or ambition, begins its change into energy. All passion becomes strength when it has an outlet from the narrow limits of our personal lot in the labour of our right arm, the cunning of our right hand, or the still creative activity of our thought.’

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Everything helps his vocation ; the beauty of a summer's day, the near approaching possession of his beloved, stir him to think out good work, and he is filled with a desire to leave the world better than he found it through his faithful labour. We have been often told of this high and spiritual side of labour in connexion with art, but George Eliot shows us that it can exist equally in all useful and innocent employment, raising and ennobling life.

‘ Such men as Adam are reared in every generation of our peasant artisans, with an inheritance of affections nurtured by a simple family life of common need and common industry, and an inheritance of faculties trained in skilful, courageous labour ; they make their way upward, rarely as geniuses, most commonly as painstaking, honest men, with the skill and conscience to do well the tasks that lie before them. . . . Their lives have no discernible echo beyond the neighbourhood where they dwelt, but you are almost sure to find there some good piece of road, some building, some application of mineral produce, some improvement of farming practice, some reform of parish abuses, with which their names are associated by one or two generations after them.’

Adam had worked hard to get the mastery of his pen, to spell, to learn his musical notes and part-singing, but most of his spare time, except on Sundays, went to the study of mechanics and figures, and all that belonged to his profession. His books were few but good, most of them feeding the spiritual side of his nature, ‘as the Bible, Taylor’s *Holy Living and*

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Dying, 'The Pilgrim's Progress, with Bunyan's Life and Holy War;' and while endowed with exceeding keenness and common sense, he had also a deep and reverent faith. Such a nature needs and seeks an ideal, and he found his in that Arthur who was to do him so great a wrong. Only noble natures can have an ideal, poor ones are too self-centred and self-content to have one; and even if the ideal be ill-placed, or the creation of our own imagination, it helps us to rise above our natural spiritual level; only if the idol be shattered, it needs much strength, tenderness, and forbearance not to turn against it, and make shipwreck of ourselves.

Adam is pointedly contrasted with Arthur Donnithorne, the young squire; we are shown how his position as heir to the estate, on whom all eyes and hopes are fixed, fostered in him the dangerous habit of dwelling on such of his actions as he considered would redound to his credit, thus blinding himself to the ugly consequences of less carefully considered, because less creditable, deeds. Adam has no self-consciousness, and face to face with the stern realities of a working life, has escaped the delusion of Arthur, the rich man's son, that a wrong may be wiped out by subsequent benefits. Adam's instinct is to face a disagreeable duty, Arthur's to shove it aside; hence he slips down the plane of temptation, beguiling himself with dreams of future generosity, while he yields, half-unconsciously, to present desires. Yet his plans

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are always beneficent; he is capable of real, if self-conscious, repentance, and attains through it to the virtue of self-sacrifice. Nearly equal parts of strength and tenderness form the groundwork of Adam's character, a tenderness that translates itself into active labour. Hard work to keep the house together for the drunken father, once a clever workman, from whom Adam inherited the flexible, long-fingered hand, and the mental faculty which made the labour of his trade delightful to him; thoughtful help for the careful mother; steady kindness to the dog. His very love for Hetty is based on her softness and need of protection, as well as on her beauty; she is the natural partner of Adam's earlier self, a bit of flesh-and-blood loveliness—hard, vain, shut up in self, but appealing to all our hearts, as well as to that of Adam, by her ignorant helplessness, her soft beauty, and her tragic fate.

Physically and morally strong, Adam's life is one of daily self-control, of conscious choosing of the right; the habit of strenuous labour in his trade passing on into his moral life, while the logical quality of his mind, trained in his work to see that certain given causes must of necessity lead to certain effects, combined with the tenderness that shrinks from giving pain, produces an infinite sense of responsibility.

“It's plain enough,” he says, “you get into the wrong road i' this life, if you run after this and that only for the sake o' making things easy and pleasant to yourself. A pig may poke his nose into the trough and think o' nothing

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outside it, but if you've got a man's heart and soul inside you, you can't be easy amaking your own bed an' leaving the rest to lie on the stones. Nay, I'll never slip my neck out o' the yoke and leave the load to be drawn by the weak ones."

The weakness in Adam's character springs out of its strength. The well-balanced nature can hardly understand the wavering, half-deliberate yielding to temptation the force of which he is almost too busy to feel, while his logical mind makes him intolerant of those who wilfully close their eyes to the evil that must follow their acts. He says to Arthur:—

"“I don't remember ever being see-saw in that way when I'd made my mind up, as you say, that a thing was wrong. It takes the taste out o' my mouth for things when I know I should have a heavy conscience after 'em. I've seen pretty clear, ever since I could cast up a sum, as you can never do what's wrong without breeding sin and trouble more than you can ever see. It's like a bit o' bad workmanship, you can never see the end o' the mischief it'll do. And it's a poor lookout to come into the world to make your fellow-creatures worse off instead o' better.”"

Adam is hard in thought and speech to the drunken father; only by strongest self-repression can he endure the well-meaning, worrying mother; he is inclined to condemn even the well-loved but unpractical Seth, who lives absorbed in devout thought and spiritual experiences, producing much forgetfulness in daily life, yet issuing in a rare and beautiful unselfishness which desires the happiness of others even at the

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sacrifice of its own—a tender hopefulness and ready sympathy, which in Adam is the result of hardest trials and inward conflict. It is one of the literary perfections of this character that every quality in it acts and is reacted on by the rest. It is this proud hardness, as well as the loss of his ideal and his loving pity for the weak, which makes him feel Hetty and Arthur's sin so bitterly. How, aided by the memory of his repentance for former unkindness over the grave of Thias, Adam overcomes his weakness and resists the temptation to seek revenge on Arthur and to forsake Hetty on the day of her trial, forms the great spiritual crisis and victory of his life.

Rightly used, sorrow raises us to nobler life; Hetty's tragedy lifts her into what may be called the first human existence she has ever had. This is brought about by the woman on whom Adam fixes his second love; whose beauty of soul and body is as spiritual as Hetty's is earthly, and who holds the central place among the women of the story.

Dinah is not merely guided by a strong sense of right, she habitually lives in a vivid consciousness of the Divine Presence, and in restful dependence on and submission to His Will; and this living Faith with her tender heart give her an intense power over struggling and suffering humanity. She unites in her person some of the chief characteristics of both brothers; her spirituality goes far beyond that of Seth, but it is also like Adam in its practical outcome.

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She strives to convert the sinner, and to give him not only religion, but the happiness of a well-ordered existence. Her ministrations include deft housewifery, tender care for the bodies as well as the souls of those to whom she is sent, and in her hands the meanest offices become a sacred service from the spirit in which they are done—that of work committed to her by God for His creatures, whom she dearly loves for His and their own sake ; this is the most usual attitude of her mind, but in time of temptation or spiritual depression she falls back with a touching trustfulness on dutiful obedience to the Will of God, as when she leaves Adam, whom she loves, to return to Snowfield.

Dinah is the fitting partner of the ennobled and disciplined Adam, who lives in conscious sympathy with all connected with him, loving and forbearing as well as aiding, widely tolerant as well as strictly upright.

The great moral lesson of the book is our responsibility for the consequences of our actions ; that of the character of Adam is, how taking up his ruined life, he built it anew in a nobler, fairer form.

‘Adam had not outlived his sorrow, had not felt it slip from him as a temporary burden, and leave him the same man again. Do any of us ? God forbid. It would be a poor result of all our anguish and all our wrestling if we won nothing but our old selves at the end of it. . . . Let us rather be thankful that our sorrow lives in us as an indestructible force, only changing its form, as forces do, and passing from pain into sympathy—the one poor word which includes all our best insight and our best love.’

Romola.

ROMOLA.

By GEORGE ELIOT.

*' Measure thy life by loss instead of gain ;
Not by the wine drunk, but by the wine poured forth ;
For love's strength standeth in love's sacrifice,
And whoso suffers most hath most to give.'*

H. E. HAMILTON KING.

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'We can only have the highest happiness . . . by having wide thoughts and much feeling for the rest of the world as well as ourselves.'—ROMOLA.

OF the many uses of good fiction, a chief one is surely that of leading the mind out and beyond the limits of our personal, every-day life. By the power of a real story our intelligence is awakened and increased, our imagination is exercised, and our sympathy widened to embrace lives and interests we do not know by experience; and therefore we owe a special debt of gratitude to writers who tell us of other times and other lands than our own. It is only waste of good time and good feeling to read some stories, such as those which depict the silly, idle emotions of silly people, who fortunately exist nowhere. Some readers are not afraid of this waste, and it is always a temptation to read what is very easily understood. But all who have once mastered the difficulties of a good historical tale, or a good story of foreign life, must feel they have gained more than they expected; not in mere knowledge alone, but specially in the understanding of true, great lives and deeds outside their own experience.

The writer, who chose to be called George Eliot,

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brings before us in *Romola*, with the toil and care of real accuracy, the intimate life of a foreign people and of a past generation. Only an historian can fully appreciate the accuracy of *Romola*. For others, it is true to say that they may safely take on trust the historical events and characters. *Romola*, Tito, and Baldassarre, Tessa, and the shop-people, are not, of course, historically accurate personages; but with these exceptions, all the characters of the story, as well as the political events, are known to history. The exceptions named, if not true to history as individuals, are all people who might have existed in the city and age in which the story is laid, and they are true to human nature in all times and places.

The story begins in the year 1492, the year in which Lorenzo de Medici, called the Magnificent, died. Lorenzo's name represented a great power in his day. In his own state of Florence it was an over-weening one. By means of his wealth, his talent, his love of rule, he almost succeeded in enslaving the city, hitherto mainly self-governed. His death saved her—his death, and the unwavering opposition of the monk, Fra Girolamo Savonarola, who owned for Florence no king but Jesus Christ.

Romola is shown us first as a girl of seventeen, the light of her blind old father's home. Bardo's son had become lost to him for ever, when, in direct opposition to his father's wishes and tastes, he took the vows of a monk. *Romola's* hopes and efforts were

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to supply her brother's place. The tie that bound her to her father was a threefold one. For her heart was full of natural filial piety, of reverence for old age, as well as for high and noble thoughts, and also of pity for weakness. Thus, she was patient and enduring in the long hours in which she strove to help Bardo in scholarly research ; patient and loving, too, when all her devotion failed to satisfy him, when he regretted her feminine intellect, and longed for his lost son. This longing on the part of Bardo, combined with the girl's pity and wish to help him, led the simple, noble father and daughter to accept at once Tito Melema, the 'pretty Greek,' of whom Bernardo del Nero, Romola's godfather, said, 'He has a lithe sleekness about him which seems marvellously fitted for slipping into any nest he fixes his mind on.' Tito, a mere adventurer, had appeared in the streets of Florence as if he had dropped from the skies. He came at a time and place when a young Greek, with smooth manners and beauty, with a good knowledge of Greek learning and a few costly gems about him, was not unlikely to receive a welcome. Tito had suffered shipwreck with his adopted father. The younger man had escaped, while the older and weaker one had been carried into captivity by pirates. His ransom might have been effected by the gems and manuscripts Tito managed to save, and it may be that the young man did not at first intend to use them only for his own advantage.

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Only Bernardo, with his keen penetration of character, and the gruff old painter, Piero di Cosimo, who had no hesitation in showing his true instincts, failed to be attracted and deceived by Tito's beautiful face and smooth address.

Tito soon became the acknowledged suitor of Romola, and, in due course, her husband. It was by the merest chance, apparently, that Romola failed to learn before her marriage that Tito was guilty of baseness which it would be least easy to her nature to forgive; for Piero's instinct was just, when he saw in Tito's fair face the possibilities of a traitor and a coward. Tito was nothing better. At the very moment that he knew himself sure of winning Romola's love, he received a message from the man who had been a father to him, bidding him make use of the gems which a Florentine collector had appraised as 'worth a man's ransom,' to free him from slavery. This message reached Tito through a Dominican monk, who was none other than Romola's brother, come home to die.

Romola was summoned to her brother's dying bed, and, beside it, she came for the first time into the presence of the great Frate, Savonarola himself. Brought up, though she was, to believe the Christian faith to be mere narrow-minded bigotry, from which cultured minds must keep themselves free, Romola was forced by the monk's quiet, mysterious power to kneel and hear the dying man's vision and message of warning

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to herself. It seemed to her but an evil and unnatural dream ; she was hurt, too, that her brother had no words for the father whom he had so deeply grieved ; but, in spite of these feelings, her spirit was for the first time awakened to a consciousness of the supernatural ; ‘ it seemed to her as if this first vision of death must alter the daylight for her for evermore.’

Afterwards Tito, bright young lover and husband, made her hide the crucifix her brother had clasped in death, and which she brought away with her. The curious cabinet painted with gay classical figures, in which Tito concealed it, was symbolical of the lightness and brightness with which he would put away all thoughts of stern reality. Little Romola guessed that, at the very moment when he made her do this, as his chosen bride, he was himself false to her ; for, when he feared he should lose her for ever, in consequence of revelations about himself the brother might make, Tito had consoled himself by a mock marriage with Tessa, a little peasant girl, ignorant, and trusting, and easily deceived.

Soon after Romola’s marriage her father died, and not without the disappointment of finding that Tito, the son from whom he had hoped so much, had other interests than those of the blind scholar. Bardo died personally poor, his possessions consisting almost entirely of a valuable collection of manuscripts and antiquities which he left to the State, when the State would find a building to receive them. This could not

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be at once, for Florence was distracted with political change. Fra Girolamo had become the real ruler of the city, and his throne was the pulpit in the Duomo. The form of government of the city was unchanged. The Signoria, the ten nobles (whose Latin secretary was now Tito Melema) remained apparently in power, but the real influence in the city was that of the great Dominican monk. It was at his invitation that Charles VIII. of France visited Florence. In his train were some prisoners, among whom was Baldassarre, Tito's adopted father, who thus unexpectedly found himself face to face with the man from whom he had hoped to receive his liberty, and who, he thought, must be dead. He now learned his treachery, and vowed revenge.

The first revelation of Tito's true character came to Romola when, in defiance of her father's lifelong wish, and of her own aim and hope, he sold the library which was the fruit of half a century of toil and frugality. 'Have you deceived somebody who is *not* dead? Is that the reason you wear armour?' It was thus that her true instinct shaped itself in a bitter cry. As it was, she felt she could live with him no longer, and after sadly watching the dispersion of the treasures she had seen gathered by her father, she could bear her home—Tito's home—no more.

Taking her brother's crucifix from its bright hiding-place, and dressed as a lay sister, Romola stole from her home, intending to go to Venice. But she was

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not thus allowed to flee her duties. Fra Girolamo, who had seen her departure, followed her, and, in a few strong words, showed her she could not thus escape. ‘ You may choose to forsake your duties, and choose not to have the sorrow they bring. But you will go forth ; and what will you find ? . . . Sorrow without duty—bitter herbs, and no bread with them.’

They were noble words, and Romola felt them so ; but her heart’s best affections were wounded at their root, and she could fear no personal suffering greater than what she was undergoing at that moment. Nor could the call of duty, so long as it appeared a personal thing alone, be of any help to her then. But it was otherwise when Savonarola spoke again, and this time of the need that others had of her, when he pointed to the crucifix in her hand and appealed to her by the devotion it symbolised. ‘ You think nothing,’ he cried, ‘ of the sorrow and wrong that are within the walls of the city where you dwell : you would leave your place empty, when it ought to be filled with your pity and your labour. If there is wickedness in the streets, your steps should shine with the light of purity ; if there is a cry of anguish, you, my daughter, because you know the meaning of the cry, should be there to still it. . . . Sorrow has come to teach you a new worship ; the sign of it hangs before you.’ And Romola’s great woman heart was melted. Out of her own deep personal loss, she rose to feel a touch of that Divine love which takes away the sin of the

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world, and, as at the voice of Christ, she came back to her place.

For the next few months Romola is shown as humbly learning of the Frate, and giving her time and possessions to help those in need. The city of Florence was brought into great straits by remaining true to her French alliance, and even suffered siege when the other Italian states, with the Pope at their head, combined against France under the name of the Holy League. Savonarola, too, had, by his independence, drawn the Papal displeasure on himself, and his public preaching became an act of open rebellion against authority.

In the tumult that followed Savonarola's arrest, Tito, traitor to all, was denounced by those whom he had betrayed, and was hounded to a miserable death at the hands of the old man, who, of all, had suffered most from his selfishness.

Romola was at this time far from Florence. Once more she had fled, and this time unrecalled. Her husband's baseness was now absolutely known to her. She had seen Baldassarre, and heard his story. She had found Tessa and her children. She knew the treachery which, for personal ends, had betrayed each political party in turn. Savonarola, too, had disappointed Romola's highest hopes ; she could not enter into the spirit which made him support his own party as the cause of God, by means she felt to be unjust.

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In her wretchedness, Romola sought to put a long distance between herself and Florence, and when she had reached the seashore she got into a boat and let herself drift; thus she was brought to an out-of-the-way island, where she found a village stricken with the plague. Here her spirit was refreshed by the simple, natural service of the sick and neglected, and after a time she felt she could go back.

Romola came home, to find Savonarola in prison and her husband dead. Her first act was to seek out poor little Tessa and to give her a home. Her greatness of soul is specially shown in the fact that she never told Tessa of the base deception that had been practised upon her, but let her think herself Tito's lawful wife, while Romola cared for Tito's children as her own. Our last picture of her, then, is surrounded by those who were not merely dependent on her bounty, but who were supported and raised by her nobility of character. Thus she lived, childless herself and worse than widowed, for her own fresh, girlish love had been cruelly blighted; but, instead of making her bitter, her personal loss made her richer to help.

It will be seen that the real interest of the book lies in the contrast of the characters of Romola and Tito. Tito was bent on 'saving himself,' on having what he liked, with that agreeable selfishness which is the more dangerous because not always found out at once.

Romola was in every way his opposite. She was

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born with a strong hereditary as well as natural love of home and family. Her first impulses were noble and unselfish. She has sometimes been blamed for rigidity in conduct towards Tito. Many excuses, if they are really needed, might be made for this. But were two beings ever less fitted to understand or act upon each other? The saddest part of the ill-assorted marriage is that Romola's nature was too large and noble to take effect upon Tito's mean and petty one, and he knew no suffering or trouble which could have awakened within her the pitifulness her true woman heart possessed so abundantly.

In *Romola*, George Eliot draws a character of the kind dearest to her, one which we believe to be her ideal for a woman; one whose early affections and interests are inseparable from the ties of home and family, who, through personal suffering and disappointment, rises ever higher in the only true life—the life of faith, hope, and charity.

It may be that to some the *book* 'Romola' will seem a little difficult, being full of complicated politics and historical and learned allusions. Let us beg those who find it so to persevere, that they may come to know the *woman* Romola, with her large brain and larger heart—great and simple, pitiful and strong.

Amyas Leigh.

WESTWARD HO!

By CHARLES KINGSLEY.

‘The love of duty is the strength of heroes.’

F. PAGET.

Amyas Leigh.

*' Still the race of Hero Spirits
Pass the lamp from hand to hand,
Age from age the words inherits,
Wife and Child and Fatherland.*

*' Still the youthful hunter gathers
Fiery joy from wold and wood,
He will dare as dared his fathers
Give him cause as good.'*

KINGSLEY.

WE are constantly told that the age of chivalry and heroism is passed away, and I am afraid we are often tempted to believe it, so that it seems an actual refreshment to read these cheering words of Charles Kingsley's, himself an embodiment of manly virtue, and to turn to the pages of *Westward Ho!* where he depicts the character of his 'own ideal knight' with such an eloquent and sympathetic touch. Unconsciously, no doubt, he has infused into the portrait of Amyas Leigh many of his own most striking characteristics, and it is interesting to compare his description of Amyas with the account of his own youth as given in his *Memoirs*.

We read that Amyas, 'who could thrash every boy in Bideford,' was as full of courtesy as of valour, that

Amyas Leigh.

he had learnt to bear pain cheerfully and to give up his own pleasure for that of others weaker than himself; that the field sports, so dear to him and in which he excelled, had taught him thoughtfulness, perseverance, and the habit of keeping his temper; that he knew the names and ways of every bird, beast, and fly, without ever having had 'an object lesson,' and that he had learnt from his father and mother that it was infinitely noble to do right, and infinitely base to do wrong. Conspicuous also throughout the story is his chivalrous protection of the weak, and his hatred of all meanness and tyranny. Such is the account given us of the hero of *Westward Ho!* and now let us glance at that of the author:—

'Charles inherited from his father's side his sporting tastes and fighting blood, the men of his family having been soldiers for generations. From his mother's side came his love of science, travel, and romance, which awoke in him the longing to see the West Indies, which was at last accomplished. He had a passionate love of natural history and a keen relish for field sports, and one of his most intimate school friends bears witness to his vehement spirit, love of truth, and the adventurous courage and impatience of injustice, which, in after life, planted him in the forefront of the battle for the weak and oppressed.'

We also read of the extraordinary power he had of bearing pain calmly, though at the same time infinitely tender and compassionate over the suffering of others.

Amyas Leigh.

I think enough has been quoted to show the strong resemblance existing between the hero adventurer of the Elizabethan era and the 'soldier priest' of Eversley, whose stirring accents still sound in our ears, although he who uttered them has passed to 'where beyond these voices there is peace.'

The valiant spirit of Amyas appears the more truly heroic when we consider the tender affection he displays towards his mother from his earliest youth, the first proof being the thoughtfulness with which, as a very young lad, he conceals from her his ardent longing to go to sea, knowing it will pain her, and the promptitude with which he realises on his father's death that he must now act and think for her, and no longer allow himself to depend upon her solicitude.

A beautiful picture of mother and son is given in the scene on the morning after he returns from his first voyage with Drake. Amyas is about to start for a bathe in the early dawn, but cannot resist peeping into his mother's room as he passes the door. He sees her absorbed in devotion, and gently kneeling down beside her, the mother and son offer their prayers together. He knew her prayers were for him, and he prayed for her, and for poor John Oxenham and his vanished crew, of whose disappearance he had been told on his arrival. After this, with the simplicity of a child, our fair-haired giant finds his way daily to his mother's side to say his prayers, until one morning

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he finds himself forestalled by his beautiful brother, Frank, the Court favourite and poet, and overhears him confide to his mother his love for Rose Salterne, the object of Amyas's own youthful devotion. The struggle for generous self-sacrifice on the part of each brother is very touching, and gives the first note of the intensity of their love for each other ; but Amyas wins the day in the noble contest, through the downright resolution and cheerful simplicity with which he renounces his claim upon Rose's affection. It may not be out of place to remark that the love story of Amyas plays a secondary part in his life, while in that of the more sensitive Frank it is the dominant passion. The devotion to his mother, and the half-protecting, half-admiring affection he displays for Frank, form the mainspring of his actions, and, we venture to think, it is chivalry rather than love that inspires him with the determination to seek Rose Salterne throughout the world at a later point in the story.

The brothers find, however, that they are not the only victims to the Rose of Torridge, but that she is the apple of discord among many of their comrades in the neighbourhood. They invite all the rival suitors to a banquet, and propose to them to form a society to which they shall give the name of the Brotherhood of the Rose, for the faithful service and protection of their liege lady, agreeing to bury all personal jealousies and rivalries under this one object, and to serve her until death as her sworn champions and brothers-in-arms.

Amyas Leigh.

Shortly after this, Sir Richard Grenville advises Amyas to seek his fortune in Ireland in fighting the Spaniards under Raleigh. Frank returns to his life at the Court of Elizabeth, where he advances in her favour and in that of his patron, Sir Philip Sydney, while honest Will Cary joins his friend Amyas, so that the Brotherhood is soon scattered, and Rose is left a prey to her own wayward fancy and vanity.

On the eve of his departure Amyas comes across Salvation Yeo, the only survivor of Oxenham's unfortunate crew, whose account of his thrilling adventures and of the horrors of the Inquisition which he has himself undergone, stirs Amyas's pulses with fresh longing to avenge his countrymen's wrongs and to fight the Spaniards to the death. Yeo's sorrow for the untimely death of Oxenham, and his burning anxiety to discover what has become of 'the little maid,' his child, find sympathetic response in Amyas's noble heart, and he takes him at once into his service. Salvation Yeo's portrait has a sombre beauty about it worthy of Velasquez, and the absolute devotion with which he attaches himself to Amyas and serves him till death is most touchingly portrayed.

Amyas distinguishes himself in Ireland in a sharp skirmish with the Spaniards, and takes prisoner the haughty Don Guzman, who is destined to work so much mischief in the ensuing narrative ; Raleigh appoints him his lieutenant, and he is placed in command of a dreary castle, surrounded by bogs, and with

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no society save that of Don Guzman, who has been adjudged to him as prisoner of war.

Thrown on each other in this solitude, the men are constrained to fraternise to a certain extent, and the wily Spaniard fills Amyas's itching ears with fabulous tales of the treasures and marvels to be discovered in the Southern Seas. After a time Sir Richard Grenville writes, inviting the Don to become his guest at Bideford until his ransom shall arrive, and Don Guzman takes his departure nothing loth, leaving our hero to his lonely existence for two more weary years. Meanwhile the Spaniard becomes a favoured guest among the Devon gentry, and Rose Salterne succumbs but too easily to his flattering tongue and graceful manners.

At last Amyas is released from his monotonous existence, and he, together with Salvation Yeo, join Sir Humphrey Gilbert's ill-fated expedition to Newfoundland, from which he returns penniless and dejected at the loss of his noble friend and commander. On reaching Bideford he finds his mother has joined Frank in London, and he is greeted by the tidings of Rose Salterne's flight from the neighbourhood, and of her father's broken-hearted condition. Will Cary throws light on the matter by telling him of Don Guzman's attentions to her, which had aroused Cary's own jealousy, and that the Spaniard's liberation and appointment to La Guayra—an island in the West Indies—occurred simultaneously with the mysterious

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disappearance of Rose. The friends at once resolve to seek her at the sword's point, and old Salterne, yearning for tidings of his daughter, and eager for revenge on the Spaniard, offers to supply them with the necessary funds for the expedition. Amyas hurries to London to see his mother and to acquaint Frank with their intention. He receives a shock on observing the altered appearance of his beloved brother, and entreats him not to accompany them on a voyage which is certain to be full of hardship and exposure. In spite of the Queen's persuasions and of the offer of knighthood, the gentle Frank insists on his right as a member of the youthful Brotherhood, and Mrs. Leigh is too high-minded and unselfish to hold him back from what he considers a sacred duty, and he returns to Bideford with Amyas, whose mind is filled with gloomy forebodings on his account.

No time is lost in fitting out a goodly ship and in selecting a crew of able and trustworthy seamen, in which latter task Yeo proves himself a valuable assistant. He is wild with delight at the prospect of fighting Spaniards again, and of once more going to seek 'the little maid.'

Meanwhile Frank looks on at these preparations with an ever-increasing humility with respect to himself, and of admiration for his brother. He marks with wonder what the years of hardship and disappointment have done for the simple sailor, ripening his manhood and developing his capacity as a com-

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mander, through the mere exercise of patience, honesty, and common sense. He sees how untiring he is, how thorough and conscientious, how cheery and sweet-natured, inspiring his men with such absolute confidence in him that they are ready to work early and late to win a smile from him.

At last the good ship *Rose* is complete at all points, and, after commander and crew have knelt for the last time to receive the Communion at Northam Church, they hove on board again and sailed out over the Bar, amid cheers from old and young and many a tearful prayer, as they glided out into the boundless West. They are watched to the last by Mrs. Leigh, who, as they vanished into the grey Atlantic, ‘bowed her head and worshipped, and then went home to loneliness and prayer.’

Even when merely glancing at the story of Amyas Leigh, it is impossible not to remark on the exquisite type of womanhood presented to us in the character of his mother. To have inspired two such sons with such tender and chivalrous devotion would be sufficient proof of the sweetness of her nature ; but every line that is penned about her, every scene in which she plays a part, offers a perfect picture of feminine grace and piety of the most elevated kind.

The two other female portraits are inferior in conception and subordinate in interest, so that it is consistent that the lifelong and dominant affection of Amyas is given to his mother, although it is possible

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some readers may take exception to this fact and consider it a defect in the novel. It must, however, be remembered that, in the man of action, of whom Amyas is emphatically a type, love-making seldom plays the leading part; whereas Frank, the student and dreamer, is consumed by his hopeless attachment to Rose, and knows no other aim in the expedition than that of rescuing her, while Amyas is loyally anxious to combine the service of his Queen and country with the more romantic object of the enterprise.

From this point the story becomes more and more absorbing, as the scenes through which the *Rose* passes take the rich colouring of the tropics, and are overshadowed by the consciousness of coming woe.

Amyas stands conspicuous in the foreground, a knightly figure of heroic courage and cheerful endurance, grand in his perfect simplicity, ever encouraging his companions and his men by his own example. They know him to be always ready to share any hardship with them as a brother, and yet look up to him with entire confidence as a wise and determined leader, well qualified to quell insubordination and to punish evildoers.

It would be unfair to anticipate the plot of this delightful book for those who have still the treat of reading it before them, but we would fain glance at one or two other points in the hero's character before bidding him farewell.

True to the ideal Kingsley has chosen to portray,

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when it becomes a question whether Rose or Frank is to be sacrificed, the thought of his mother's anguish and his own brotherly devotion decide the matter, and it is the intensity of his grief when he finds his efforts to be unavailing that embitters him for a time and changes his courage into recklessness, undermining the natural generosity of his nature. Yet at the same critical period of his career his treatment of the beautiful and lawless Ayacanora is grand in its ascetic purity, and all the more to be admired that he is at first irresistibly attracted to her. The behaviour of the whole Brotherhood and crew is inspired by the example of their Captain, and, though at times the fear of his own weakness betrays him into unnecessary harshness towards the maiden who has been so singularly placed under his protection, he is able to tell his mother, when he at last returns home, 'that he has kept unspotted, like a gentleman and a Christian, the soul which God had given into his charge.'

Heroic as are the qualities of Amyas Leigh, his is by no means a faultless character. In the pause that ensues after his return from La Guayra, a time of waiting and suspense which he spends at home with his mother, he nurses his revenge against the Spaniards until it becomes a consuming fire, and one hardly recognises the cheery comrade and loving son in the gloomy and irritable man who roughly repulses poor Ayacanora, and pains his mother's

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tender heart by his rebellious thoughts and words. Only when the news of the Armada's approach arrives does he recover his spirits, which rise to an almost insane pitch at the prospect of again fighting the Spaniards and encountering his detested foe, Don Guzman.

But, alas ! Amyas has shut himself out from the face of God, and when whole crews are receiving the Communion before going into action, he turns away, as he says, 'in charity with no man.'

Swift and sure is the retribution that falls upon him, and, though our hearts ache with pity for the humbled giant, we feel it to be as just as it is merciful. In judging this man, one must take into consideration the time in which he lived, when the hearts of Englishmen burned to revenge the horrors of the Inquisition and the insolent tyranny of Spain ; and, when we add to these reflections the remembrance of his private wrongs, we can comprehend without wishing to justify his conduct.

Nothing can be more deeply pathetic than his acceptance of his punishment ; so complete that he not only admits the justice of it, but recognises the nobler qualities of his late enemy, and all our old affection for him returns as we read his touching words of repentance and self-abasement, and realise that henceforth he is called on to endure a life of inaction and helplessness while still in the flower of his manhood.

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We leave him with regret, and with something of the same feeling with which we closed the Memoir of his biographer. ‘Take him for all in all, we shall not look upon his like again.’

Hereward.

HEREWARD THE WAKE.

By CHARLES KINGSLEY.

*'I waged His wars, and now I pass and die.
O me! for why is all around us here
As if some lesser god had made the world,
But had not force to shape it as he would
Till the High God behold it from beyond,
And enter it and make it beautiful?
Or else as if the world were wholly fair,
But that these eyes of men are dense and dim,
And have not power to see it as it is,
Perchance because we see not to the close;
For I, being simple, thought to work His will,
And have but stricken with the sword in vain.'*

TENNYSON—'Passing of Arthur.'

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*'If ever that most noble knight
Were for one hour less noble than himself,
Pray for him that he 'scape the doom of fire,
And weep for her who drew him to his doom.'*
TENNYSON—*'Idylls of the King.'*

THE story of Hereward the Wake has one peculiar charm which is not always to be found in stories. It is that charm which is found in matchless perfection in the Greatest of Story-books, and which gives to the life-histories recorded there such wonderful power and influence over our lives of nowadays, helping us, if we use the help rightly, to 'make our lives sublime.' It is the charm of perfect truth. The man Hereward is made to live and move before us as he lived and moved before his contemporaries, with all the strength and all the weakness of his character, a man of like passions with ourselves.

All the strength: Loyal-hearted, truth-speaking, faithful friend, noble enemy, chivalrous helper of the weak and oppressed, scorner of meanness and double dealing and sly diplomacy, reverent as a Christian, but loathing utterly all cant or glib profession of piety.

All the weakness: A certain over-boastfulness and

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vaingloriousness of spirit, a bitter memory of wrongs and heathenish joy in vengeance, and, above all, that weakness which caused his fall, as it caused the sin of Solomon and the ruin of Samson—the weakness to which strong men especially are prone, of yielding to the wiles of evil women.

To those who are banded together for the very purpose of working—God helping them—to raise and ennoble all womanhood, this absorbingly interesting story can scarcely fail to give food for very serious thought of the power and responsibilities of women. For we see the character of a strong and noble man moulded at one time by the influence of a noble-hearted woman, and then weakened and degraded by that of a bold and wicked woman. Torfrida makes Hereward feel ashamed of his foolish boasting and disgusted with swinish pleasures of heavy feasting; she draws out all that is best in him, and teaches him, in small matters as in great, to show himself a true Christian knight. And for love of her the wild lad, who had been exiled and outlawed for the outrageous behaviour which grieved his pious parents, Leofric and Godiva, and gave unpardonable offence to some of the clergy—this wild lad strove to rule himself, and learned to pray. Torfrida, not less as his wife than as the lady of his love, was Hereward's good angel, doing angel's work on earth in the training of a human soul.

Ah! but Alfruda, the beautiful, the selfish, the

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wilful, the wicked—what of her? Tempting by all the power of her beauty and of her guile, determined to win Hereward, less because she loved him than because it was her ambition to possess him, knowing, indeed, in her vain and shallow nature, nothing of true love—love which desires above all the true happiness of the loved one—what has she to answer for? Nothing less than the ruin of a noble nature, the tragic end of an heroic life!

But, though she gains her wicked will, she does not gain the expected happiness. She knows in the depth of her heart that, though she has succeeded in snaring Hereward's feet in her wicked web, she has never really won his heart. *That* is with the heroic woman who has proved the height and depth of her love by willingly retiring into a convent, and thus allowing her husband to have a divorce, that he may gain that which he thinks will bring him happiness—the new wife, young and lovely, the siren who has lured him from his allegiance to Torfrida herself.

There are such tragedies in real life, and nothing can be more interesting to any thoughtful human being than to watch the unfolding of any one such story, tracing the consequences of men's actions and following them through the ups and downs of life, finding for ourselves as we read—

‘Some duty set in clearer light,
In seeing with another's sight
How men the ends of life may gain.’

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In reading such a history as this of Hereward and his noble but fruitless struggle, this thought also can hardly fail to strike us, that if only we had clear sight of the ends of things, many tangles and troubles of our lives would cease to seem so painful and perplexing to us as they now do. For we see that the Norman Conquest, which to Hereward and his friends seemed nothing less than the ruin of their nation, was far from proving in the end so black and hopeless a calamity. The wave of conquest was not the destructive ocean wave which sweeps away all prosperity and leaves behind it desolation; rather was it like the overflow of the great river of Egypt, which covers all the land indeed for a time, but, then retiring, leaves the soil enriched with sprouting life. Cruelty there was, and confusion of justice and injustice, grasping greed, wily statecraft in the conquerors; and in the conquered, bitterness against God and man, passionate desire of vengeance, reprisals secret and open, black despair, which opened the door to many crimes. But if Hereward could (or *can*, for we must remember that the story is a true one, and Sir Hereward as real a character as William of Normandy himself)—if he could look now from another world, and learn what has passed in the land that he loved so well, and how great a nation grew from the mixture of conquerors and conquered, we may feel sure that he would rejoice, though perhaps he would say, ‘Even had I known, I could not have done otherwise than I did.’ Perhaps a man

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so noble, so devoted to his country, could not have done otherwise than resist her conquerors to the bitter end.

The history of his life and doings is too great a story to be briefly told. Hereward, surnamed the Wake from the acute and watchful spirit which was not too common a characteristic of the Saxons, is depicted for us as the ideal Englishman, wanting in the courtly manners and finer statecraft of the Flemish and French, and even of the Northman; a nature strong, noble, and simple, with something of the child about it in its candour and absence of guile and suspicion, in its credulity, too, and readiness to be influenced, and its love of song and story and delight in success which leads to boastfulness. Fair-haired and blue-eyed, not of the type of the Norse giants, but broad-shouldered and sturdy, the physical strength of Hereward was such as in those days sufficed to raise a man into a popular hero—a few centuries earlier would have ranked him with the gods.

Hereward was son of Leofric, the great Saxon thane, and of that Godiva who, to win remission of a heavy tax for the people of Coventry, rode through the town wrapped only in her flowing hair. In his wild youth he provoked the anger of the monks and priests by his rough doings, and those of the reckless band which he gathered about him, and gave so much scandal that, by the desire of his own parents, too serious to understand such a lad, he was made an

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outlaw. So he went forth into the world rejoicing in his great strength, and, because in heart he was noble, not abusing it, but doing his great deeds chiefly in defence of the oppressed. Great deeds, indeed, these were, which minstrels for centuries delighted to sing, such as the slaying of the great bear, the rescue of the Princess of Cornwall, or the winning of the wonderful mare, Swallow. In Flanders he meets Torfrida, the Southern woman with the marvellous black eyes, whose power is not only in her beauty, but that which subdued men in those ignorant days, the power of an educated mind. She, as we have seen, proves a good angel to Hereward. Had not his lot fallen upon evil days, we may suppose that he would have lived on with her into the honoured old age which should have followed the noble knighthood to which Leofric's scapegrace son attained. In the judgment of all his contemporaries there were few more perfect knights. But Edward the Confessor, the saintly, but weak and even foolish king, was dead; Harold, between whose family and that of Leofric there was long-standing jealousy, became king. Then came Senlac, and the Normans pouring into England after their Duke with greedy eyes and grasping hearts.

William the Conqueror was a good judge of men. He would have had Hereward the Wake (alike for his strength and his keen watchfulness) to be his friend, and not his enemy. But that could not be, and the Wake gathered men together—the sturdy,

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cool-headed men of the eastern fen country—and held all those fens of Cambridge and Lincolnshire and the counties round, with the Isle of Ely for a stronghold. He had learned abroad, and he continued to learn from his enemies, the Normans, more of the art of war than the English knew. But the struggle must needs be a hopeless one, for William had force on his side which overmatched all that Hereward could raise, especially when success had rallied even the majority of the English to his standard. At the long last the brave leader was forced to burn his stronghold and fly, hiding up and down the greenwood for years, and, even in that desperate resort, continuing to be a thorn in the side of the Conqueror, who had tried diplomacy as well as force of arms against the enemy whom he was forced to respect, and whom he would gladly have won as an ally. Alas! that, as the Philistines conquered Samson, so the last of the English was conquered—brought helpless into the hands of the new King by the wiles of a wicked woman! The decline of his noble nature, the scattering of the devoted band, the sufferings of the brave and proud soul of Torfrida among her monastic austerities, make the close of the story almost too sad to read. The character of Torfrida is drawn with marvellous skill; her undeserved sufferings at the last rouse in us, as they roused in the hearts of Hereward's followers, an ardent sympathy. In her love for her knight is a touch of *motherliness*

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which gives to the portrait a special reality, for we see how it corresponds with that childlike element in the character of Hereward which we have already noticed.

There is much that is worth pondering over in the growth of her character, and the darkening of its sunshine under the tragic circumstances of her life. The story of this noble but hopeless struggle must needs grow sadder as it goes on. But through it all the writer, though he never preaches to us, but simply unwinds history, shows us the consequences of good deeds and those of evil deeds, and makes us feel that whatever rapine and wrong go forward on earth for a time, yet 'the Lord's seat is in heaven,' and that for those who have striven to do His will, so far as their weak eyes could see it, with them it is well for ever. For Hereward the Wake—let his one great sin not blot out for us his great nobleness—for him the fight for justice and freedom was the nearest duty, and he did it with all his might, with the strength of his strong arm. For those who come after him the same eternal warfare waits, for light against darkness, for freedom and truth against slavery and wrong in some form or another. The story leaves Richard de Rulos, Hereward's heir in the third generation, showing his courage by 'daring to be a man of peace,' and, for the glory of God and the good of his fellow-men, *draining the fens*.

Charles Ravenshoe.

RAVENSHOE.

By HENRY KINGSLEY.

*' . . . if it be a sin to covet honour,
I am the most offending soul alive.'*

HENRY V., Act iv., Scene 3.

Charles Ravenshoe.

'He was the best man I ever knew.'—RAVENSHOE.

CHARLES RAVENSHOE was born on the 10th of June, 1831, at Ravenshoe Hall, a fine old house on the North Devon coast. His father was the head of a very ancient Roman Catholic family, his mother was a Protestant, and died when Charles was born, having exacted a promise from her husband that this her second son should be brought up in her own faith.

This promise was faithfully kept by Denzil Ravenshoe, though not without difficulty, for he was a man of weak character, and much under the influence of Father Mackworth, his chaplain and confessor, who had been at Ravenshoe before the master of it was married. Little Charles was sent out to nurse with the Irish wife of his father's favourite servant, now his gamekeeper, James Horton. She took him into her arms along with her own boy baby William, and nursed and loved them both alike, while Ellen, her only girl, was like an elder sister to both. She soon, however, had to give up Charles to a Protestant nurse, who had entire charge of him; while, as he grew old enough, the vicar taught him

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his catechism and his prayers. Every Sunday he went to the parish church and sat by himself in the great square family pew, a solitary little child ; but not a lonely one, for all the village were his friends, and rejoiced to see him there. He had what goes far to make childhood happy—the devoted affection of crowds of faithful servants and dependents. They spoiled him, of course, but the recollection of their love would be sweet to him all his life through. The relations of landlord and tenant, servant and master, were still of a feudal character at Ravenshoe fifty or sixty years ago ; but they were touched and made more vivid, perhaps, by the new ideas of mutual duty and kindness which were beginning to be felt. At that time, at any rate, the old bottles could still hold some of the new wine. And then the little boy was surrounded by all the interests of country life—the happy life of a great easy-going, extravagant country house, hospitable and comfortable, with all the dogs and horses that any one could wish for ; plenty of sport, and so much space and freedom that preserving could never be a grievance ; beautiful wild country over which he might roam at will, and the still wilder and more beautiful sea always before his eyes. And Charles was a nice little boy, honest and loving, with curly hair and a rosy face, devoted to his older brother Cuthbert, who was a grave, serious youth, who did not like to show the real affection he felt for Charles, and quite ready to be friends with Father Mackworth,

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who was the only person who did not love him in return. So Charles had an extremely happy childhood, in spite of some black sins and sorrows in the background of his family history.

Peter Ravenshoe, the father of Denzil, had married a certain Lady Alicia Ascot, a sister of Lord Ascot, a great sporting nobleman, who lived at Ranford, a fine place on the Thames, not far from Twyford. When Charles was about ten years old his great-aunt, the dowager Lady Ascot, sent for him to pay her a visit, which was the beginning of many things for Charley. There he met and made friends with his cousin, Lord Welter, a boy of his own age, just going to Eton, and there he saw General Mainwaring, a fine old hero of the Affghan war, and also a splendid old gentleman, one of the dandies of the Regency, Lord Saltire, who surprised him by asking after his father's old servant Jim. And there, too, he fell in love with Adelaide Welter, a beautiful little girl with fair crinkly hair and bright blue eyes, an adopted child of his kind, eccentric, grand lady of an aunt, Lady Ascot. Charles enjoyed himself very much, and then came home by train and coach through much such a 'blizzard' as has lately raged in the west country, though he never thought of so calling it, with the great trees crashing round him, and the wind howling and blowing great guns. That night there was a shipwreck in Ravenshoe Bay, and a little, quiet, brown-eyed girl, who was called Mary Corby, was

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saved from the wreck and brought up at Ravenshoe. Charles and Lord Welter had a happy life at Eton, but at the University they were wild and idle, and, after a great row in Charles' rooms, were both rusticated, and went away to Ranford together, after an extremely unseemly but apparently innocent mis-demeanour, in the account of which it appears that young men then enjoyed rougher fun, but held the offended authorities in far greater awe than at present. William, Charles' foster-brother, who had grown up remarkably like him, was with him at this time. At Ranford Charles met Adelaide, a beautiful, ambitious girl, who had laughed at his devotion all his life, but who yielded to his entreaties and promised to marry him. Old Lady Ascot pretended to be angry, but really encouraged this attachment, and Charles went home happy, but having discovered that Lord Ascot was almost ruined, and that Ranford was a fast house, where it was not well to be.

Over the dear old home there was a shadow of coming evil. Denzil Ravenshoe's health was failing, and Father Mackworth constantly watched him. Another priest, a kind, jolly Irishman, Father Tiernay, had come to join him, and with him Charles got on capitally, but Mackworth resented Charles' boyish roughness, and evidently tried to find a quarrel with him. Once Charles accidentally let his Greek lexicon fall over the stairs on Mackworth's head; the priest thought that it was an intentional insult, and in his

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anger let fall words which sank into Charles' mind, and gave him a dim sense of danger ahead. This, too, was William's belief, who, Catholic as he was, distrusted Mackworth, and the trouble fell, first of all, on the keeper's house. Ellen, the beautiful sister, fled from her home—why, and with whom, no one knew; her mother died of grief, and Charles and William were nearly equally distressed and ashamed. Still, these, which were to be the last days of Charles' youth, were, on the whole, happy. Mary was his companion; Cuthbert, though cold at times, was at others passionately affectionate; Adelaide had promised to be his; sometimes he saw her. Friends and visitors—Welter, Lord Saltire, and a college friend, John Marston—came to Ravenshoe. Several things happened which Charles did not know or notice. John Marston fell in love with Mary and she refused him.

Almost at the same moment Father Tiernay mistook James Horton for Denzil Ravenshoe, and James mistook Charles for William. Ellen, before she left home, quarrelled—first with William, then with the priest.

Charles himself, warm-hearted and simple-minded, with pride of name and race hardly to be known from love of home and kindred, but with little strength of principle or power of self-control, was in no way fitted to stand the heavy blow which was to fall upon him.

He went back to Oxford, and in Welter's absence did well there, and rowed in the Oxford eight, among

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men who in those days, when 'muscular Christianity' was a powerful inspiration, were certainly 'good all round.' The race was won, and as Charles, in high spirits, stood in front of the 'Ship' at Mortlake, William touched him on the arm. His father was dying, he must come home at once. William was tender to him as a brother, took care of him, made him eat, and tried to comfort him, but a deadly terror hung upon Charles. He feared worse than sorrow. They came too late to Ravenshoe: its master was dead. Nothing could further trouble him, and his old servant James died in the same hour of grief at his loss, and was laid beside him in the family vault of the Ravensshoes.

'They will never know what is coming,' said William.

'Do you know?' asked Charles.

'No,' said William, and then the two swore to stand by each other.

The week before the funeral was spent by Cuthbert in prayers and in struggles to avert what he knew must come; by gentle little Mary in nerving herself to seek another home, which old Lady Ascot offered her for the present.

The funeral was over, and Charles and William were summoned to the library together; Cuthbert, pale as death, and the two priests were there. Then the blow fell. William, not Charles, was the true Ravenshoe; the Irish foster-mother had changed them

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at nurse. Charles was the son of James, who was himself the illegitimate son of Peter Ravenshoe, so that the Ravenshoe face had belonged to him and to his son alike. Charles fainted with the shock, but when he came to himself, holding by William's arm, and knew it was true, he refused all Cuthbert's offers of a provision for him, said that he would go where he could never be heard of, asked William, who said scarcely anything, to take his horse and gun, and after a wild outburst of grief and love for Cuthbert, whose heart was breaking for him, rushed away and flung himself on the floor of his room.

He had lost his identity, for all young souls are part of their surroundings, and Charles had no self apart from Ravenshoe, and his own people, and the sense of his own place in the world. Whatever he believed, the only *living* part of his creed was that he was a gentleman, and even that seemed now swept from him. He was literally beside himself; William's faithful love and Cuthbert's tenderness brought him no comfort, and in despairing pride he fled from his old home in the night.

One thing might still belong to him, Adelaide's love. He went to Ranford, and found that Adelaide had fled with Lord Welter, and not as his wife. He went away without a word, ignorant that only half the mystery of his birth was explained, and that old Lady Ascot had more to tell. She and Cuthbert and William set every possible agency at work to find him;

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but perhaps detectives were less keen in those days, advertisements less widely spread, the telegraph less helpful, for they never found him, though he was close at hand. Nor could he, at first, find his sister Ellen, the only real relative he had in the world.

Charles took service as a groom with Hornby, a lieutenant in the Guards, and lived in a London mews. He did not mind it much on the surface, but really his heart was broken. His master knew he was a gentleman, and the other gentlemen's servants, whom he found as a class worthy of all respect and liking, were very kind to him. He himself was kind to a little shoeblack in Grosvenor Square. Very slowly the sense of life and pain came back to him. One day he saw Lord Welter, and then, soon after, he saw Mary Corby with the children of an old friend to whom she was governess; and Mary talked to them about Charles and Ravenshoe. Then Hornby told him that Lord Welter had at last married Adelaide, and Charles learned that he had ruined Ellen, but that she, nobler than Adelaide, had refused to marry him because she would not act as a decoy to the young men with whom he wished to gamble.

We must pass over a period of slowly failing courage. Ellen left Lord Welter's home, Charles met him, and thoughts of their boyish affection so softened his heart, sick and faint with trouble, that they parted hardly as enemies, rather as separated friends. Then, with good news of which he never

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dreamed within his reach, Charles turned his back on friends and brothers, and enlisted as a private in a regiment bound for the Crimea. Desperately wounded at Balaclava, Charles crept home, with broken health and crushed spirits, to find, indeed, that

‘All the sport was stale, lad,
And all the wheels run down.’

He took service with an officer whose life he had saved ; but the life with inferiors, which had been possible to a man of not very active brain and interested in outdoor life while in strong health, became intolerable to him now that his nerves were all on edge with pain and sleeplessness.

Dark thoughts of the river and of ending his misery in its depths came across him ; and, when a summons to the deathbed of the little shoeblack whom he had formerly befriended obliged him to cross Westminster Bridge, it was with the feeling that he did not know how he should come back again.

As he held the dead child in his arms, some one touched his shoulder, and he looked round and saw his friend—John Marston.

Charles was found by a series of accidents, as strange as those by which he had been constantly missed. He had to hear much,—that Lord Saltire had left him money, that Lady Ascot all along had known that his father, called James Horton, had been the lawful, not the illegitimate, son of Peter Ravenshoe,

Charles Ravenshoe.

so that his foster-mother's deceit had really put him in his right place ; Ellen and he were the true Ravenshoes, Cuthbert and William were the children of the younger son.

Then Charles cried out that he would hide again ; he would never displace Cuthbert. But Cuthbert was beyond the reach of earthly change, he had been drowned while bathing, at which news Charles broke down into passionate grief, and was soon too ill with brain fever to know that all his loving friends were round him.

He recovered after a terrible illness, through which William, only too thankful to give him back his own, nursed him tenderly,—recovered to find that his heart had long been Mary Corby's, and to return to Ravenshoe again, where Ellen emerged from the convent in which she had hidden herself, and supplied the missing links in the evidence of her own and Charles' rights. So Charles, his wild pride subdued and his heart full of thankfulness, came back to the friends who loved him so well. But there was still a shadow on his kindly face, and the merry look had gone for ever from his eyes.

The story of Ravenshoe is so complicated that the only way to bring out the most lovable character of the hero seemed to be to tell it as clearly as possible, but in this way we have done very little justice to the book as a whole, or to the other splendid characters which it contains. Who will ever forget the church-

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going of those delightful children, Gus and Flora ; the humour of Lord Saltire's remarks, and of old Lady Ascot's unexpected turns of character and conversation ; the fresh, hearty swing of the whole story, which, sad as it is, is still so human and so wholesome, so full of sunshine and fresh air ? It is inspired by a spirit at once liberal and intensely aristocratic, and also most optimistic—a firm belief that the framework of English society as it is, or was in 'the fifties,' offers the noblest possibilities both for masters and servants, for rich and poor. Then there is the old romantic view of the Church of Rome as a mysterious foe, but a foe here treated respectfully and chivalrously. There is a glory of romance over it all, no one, even Lord Welter, is as bad as he seems, a sort of outspoken innocence about the book which seems to belong to a period when many ideas, now hackneyed, were fresh, and 'when all the world was young' with a spring of youth which the author's greater brother had done much to set flowing.

One of the closest and noblest followers of Charles Kingsley was his brother Henry, and the love of brother for brother, in spite of all differences of religion and character, is beautifully shown in Cuthbert and Charles Ravenshoe, while the tie that binds William to both is hardly less strong. The ties of kindred, of neighbourhood, of faithful service, are brought out in their fullest strength, and with every charm of external picturesqueness.

Charles Ravenshoe.

It is a book that is full of faith, in home and friends and country; in short, in all the possibilities of life and character. Charles Ravenshoe's heart is nearly broken by misfortune, and the story is as full of tragedy as a story can well be. But its answer to the question, 'Is life worth living?' is a most emphatic, 'Yes!' And therefore in its delightful pages we shall find many friends who will help us to live worthily.

Mademoiselle Mathilde.

MADemoisELLE MATHILDE.

By HENRY KINGSLEY.

‘Self Sacrifice! *What is love worth that does not show itself in action? and more, which does not show itself in passion in the true sense of that word: namely, in suffering? in daring, in struggling, in grieving, in agonising, and, if need be, in dying for the object of its love?*’—CHARLES KINGSLEY.

Mademoiselle Mathilde.

“*Love is all and Death is nought !*” *quoth she.*’

ROBERT BROWNING.

NO one can read Henry Kingsley’s story of *Mademoiselle Mathilde*, disjointed, oddly put together as it is, without feeling that they have made a new friend in beautiful, clumsy Mathilde d’Isigny, with her unselfish, loving soul, her devotion to others, her unfailing abnegation of self. Not a perfect woman by any means, yet one who is ever striving after perfection, and who wins our affection and respect by her honest desire to do right, and her large-hearted love for all with whom she comes in contact.

‘For out of the abundance of her own great heart she could love. God only, Who made that great heart, can say how much. Could love, I say — *did* love ! Everything she met she took to her great capacious bosom, and loved them. High and low, rich and poor, dogs, cats, and dormice. There was an enormous capacity of loving in her, which expressed itself in her face,’ and which shed itself most upon her sister Adèle, who, lovely and lovable as she is, was cause of most of her troubles, and of all the greatest sorrow of her life ; for ‘Mathilde was a woman who ought to have had children to take care of, for she loved those best who teased her most. Full of humour withal, but “utterly unable to sneer at people,” amused most of all at her-

Mademoiselle Mathilde.

self, "violently protesting against doing anything whatever, in a real Teutonic manner," and spending her life "in doing such things as were fit to be done, such as were right, after all."

As to looks, she is described as one of those persons about whose beauty there is always discussion. 'Some people said that Mademoiselle Mathilde was decidedly plain. Some said that she must have been rather pretty when she was younger. Others, again, said that what little beauty she had wore well, and that she did not show her age, which was twenty-four. Others, again, said that she had a cold, hard, and somewhat stupid face. Others said that her face wanted expression until she was roused. But Mrs. Bone' ('her English servant') declared 'that Mademoiselle's face was that of an angel.' Added to this doubtful beauty a short and clumsy figure, and a voice 'like the chiming of silver bells.'

She and her sister Adèle are the daughters of M. d'Isigny, of one of the oldest families of France, and of an Englishwoman of good birth, but with such a violent temper that husband and children alike quail before it, and for the sake of peace have agreed to live on her estates in Dorsetshire, while she occupies M. d'Isigny's château in Brittany, and the time in which the story is laid is that terrible one, surpassing in its horrors all that fiction has ever imagined—the time of the French Revolution.

The two girls have not a very happy time with

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their father ; for, good man as he is, he is most certainly what nurses call ‘*contrairy*,’ and amusing descriptions are given of his methods of discipline, and of his curious crotchets in the disposal of the family life ; yet, with all his crotchets, a man to respect, even when he is most provoking—brave to the core ; ‘a very tall, splendidly made man, as to body : narrow flanks, deep chest, graceful carriage. As to features, regular ; as to complexion, perfect, . . . the whole form of the face noble and grand, handsome and inexorably calm ;’ and though driving Mathilde sometimes, as she said herself, not so much to rebellion as to revolution by his sternness, ‘making virtue appear so extremely disagreeable,’ yet when he condescends to a little gentleness winning her so utterly that she vows to give him her life if required, in the stormy times coming on their unhappy country, and if need be ‘to die mute.’

“‘Tell me,” he says, “are you afraid of death ?”

“‘I am your daughter, sir.”

“‘And so is Adèle,” said M. d’Isigny, quietly, “who certainly could not die mute. What I mean is this. Do you think that, if everything went wrong, you could trust yourself to die without mentioning names ?”

“‘I am sure I could, sir.”

“‘I am not so sure, you are not submissive ; you break out at times and objurgate me. And just now, when I complimented you about the management of a wretched domestic detail concerning two fools, you burst into tears. I doubt I cannot trust you.”

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“You may trust me to the very death, sir; and I will die silent. I only ask this, Will you be kind to me?”

“No,” said d’Isigny, shortly. “I was kind to you just now, and you made a fool of yourself. I shall be stern to you, and keep you up to the mark.”

This is the discipline which, meant to brace Mathilde, drives her sister, weak and pleasure-loving, and abjectly afraid of her father, into deceit and disobedience, involving Mathilde often in the consequences of her faults, and taking as her right all the love that Mathilde showers on her, even to the renunciation of life’s dearest hopes.

Very early in the story we gather the first hint of what such renunciation means. Adèle, with her charm of beauty and pretty ways, has won and returns the affection of their cousin, Louis de Valognes, but, fearing her father’s objection to the match, conceals her feeling, while Louis has allowed both M. d’Isigny and Mathilde to think that his visits and attentions were paid to the latter. Mathilde’s true, honest love goes out to the gallant lover who seems to have courted it, and all the time Adèle, though engaged to an English neighbour, Sir Lionel Somers, carries on a clandestine correspondence with Louis, over the water in France; but, the news of the English engagement reaching Louis de Valognes, he starts off at once to see what can be done, writing first to tell Adèle that he is coming to claim her hand. The letter, before it reaches Adèle, falls into the hands of M. d’Isigny, who,

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seeing how he has been deceived, sets to work to punish Adèle with one of his ingeniously contrived systems, this time taking the form of elaborately respectful deference to all her wishes, driving the foolish girl nearly crazy. Mathilde, seeing the torments her sister is subjected to, ignorant of her offence, does what she can to shield her, and in so doing follows her one morning when she is evidently starting out on a secret expedition—follows her to warn her that their father is close behind, and to save her if possible from the effects of any indiscretion she may have in view; and so, thinking of Louis de Valognes, her lover as she imagines him to be, she follows Adèle on that summer morning.

‘There was not a whisper of the summer wind across the flowered grass, not a scent of rose or woodbine, not a rustle of air among the trees, but what spoke of him, and her love for him. Her whole great soul was filled with a tender love for him, and as she walked under the gathering shadows, and thought of him, and of the honour he had done her among all women, her noble face developed a radiant and glorious beauty, to which that of Adèle was small and commonplace.’

And then, hearing voices, she looks through the hedge, and sees Adèle clasped in De Valognes’ arms, a blow that strikes her as if to death. ‘In the full flush of her gentle, honest love for him, she had found him false, and herself a dreaming fool.’ Long afterwards, when she was giving her life itself for her sister, and

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one said to her how hard it was to die, she only said, 'Bless you, I have died before this.' All thought of herself, all care for her own happiness died then. One moment she thought within herself that she had but to keep silence, to leave them unwarned, and the punishment for their deceit would surely come upon them; the next her whole thought was how to save Adèle—foolish, pretty Adèle—from the consequences of her deceit, though she determines that the deceit must last no longer. She knows that Sir Lionel must be undeceived, and that in those days of duels the result will most likely be a fight to the death between the rivals for Adèle's hand, and that her father will be equally called on to fight; so, confronting Louis, she bids him fly at once, that her father is close at hand, and that if he finds Louis there, the consequences to Adèle will be very terrible.

And then she tries her best to put things straight for them all by going to Father Martin, their priest, and begging him to 'help Adèle out of the consequences of her awful indiscretion,' treating her own sorrow as of little moment and to be disregarded, so only that Adèle may be saved.

The duel is averted; the engagement with Sir Lionel broken without a quarrel; Adèle sent back to France, to marry De Valognes in the end, while Mathilde remains in Dorsetshire to look after her father's interests there. The year goes on; in France things get worse and worse, and the Revolution, the

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result of years of oppression, is bearing fruit in cruelty and murder, while poor, lonely Mathilde, in England, occupies herself with her poor and sick, thinking always of others and never of herself, yearning for the exercises of her religion, debarred to her now that Father Martin has returned to France, and at last, Romanist as she is, borrowing her servant's English Bible and reading it with a hungry soul, for here, in this forbidden Bible, she found every phase of her soul satisfied.

“Why have they kept it from me?” she said; and there was no answer.’

To her in her loneliness came Sir Lionel Somers, formerly her sister's affianced husband, but now, with his eyes opened, beginning to see that Mathilde, whom he had scarcely thought of before, was one of the most charming and original women he had ever met, and, as a natural consequence, he fell in love with her; and Mathilde, ‘a woman with a great longing heart which had never been satisfied,’ loved him, and felt that this second love was so strong, that she told him who knew all her story, that she really thought she had never loved any but him from the first, and he should be the last.

Then, in the flush of this new-found happiness, she is called upon again to resign it, and again for Adèle. M. d'Isigny sends for her to look after Adèle, now Marquise de Valognes, who is in the thick of Royalist plots, dragged into them by her violent and reckless mother; and Mathilde, knowing full well that, as her

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lover put it, she is risking her own life and his happiness, crosses to France, where, in those days, no one who bore an aristocratic name was safe. The very night after her arrival at her sister's château the guards arrive to arrest Adèle, and Mathilde, prompted by her mother, goes forth in her place.

‘Are you the daughter of d’Isigny, who married the *ci-devant* Marquis de Valognes?’ they ask. And Mathilde tells the great lie from which she never departed, ‘I am,’ and is carried away to prison in Paris.

A wonderful picture is drawn for us of the life in this prison; ladies and gentlemen of the noblest birth, huddled together in misery and in daily fear of death, yet keeping up as far as might be the old traditions of their order, the courtliness of manner, the refinements of etiquette, and going to trial and execution with the same stately grace with which they walked the minuet in happier days; many of them those who, by their luxury, their profligacy, their carelessness of all things good, had reduced the nation to such bitter straits, and yet by sheer force of breeding rising to heroism, and dying a noble death after years of wasted life.

To them comes Mathilde, bright, cheerful, willing to save Adèle even by her own death, yet still hopeful that her life may be spared, and here, as ever, looking out for what she can do to alleviate the lot of others. She takes at once to her heart two sisters, sharing with them her wretched cell, and mentally comparing them to herself and Adèle: the elder, strong

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and patient ; the younger, beautiful, ‘utterly wearied, utterly idle, and petulant in her idleness,’ kept by her sister’s love from the knowledge of the ruin that has come upon them and all they held dear. And Mathilde, in her strong yet tender love for both, breaks the news of all this misery to the capricious young one, teaching her to bear more patiently the present troubles.

Then comes the end, when the prisoners are let out one by one, to be struck down by assassins at the prison door. A French gentleman, St. Méard, who had known her of old and had kept her secret for her, learning as he did so to love and honour her, begs her, on his knees, to own that she is not the Marquise de Valognes who has been implicated in Royalist plots, but only her innocent sister just come from England, and once a kind friend to Marat, one of the leaders of the Revolution, who could save her with a word ; her English groom, William, who, for love of his mistress, has got himself arrested so as to be with her, implores her to speak out. But she only answered, ‘You weary me, you two ; I promised my father.’ And so after a time, they sat still and saw her pray, till the guards came to take her to her doom.

‘The night was late when they got downstairs into the main passage or hall which led to the street. . . . A table with ruffians, guards with pikes, brandy bottles on the side table.’

The President interrogates her :—

““ You are the *soi-disant* Marquise de Valognes ? ”

““ I am the *soi-disant* Marquise de Valognes,” she an-

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swered, firmly ; and thought, "I shall not die with a lie on my lips after all."

Then they accuse her of plotting, and the mock trial is at an end ; she is ordered forth to die, and her last words are, 'You men, I forgive you all ;' and to her friend, who stands by, 'I will compromise you by no messages, but, if you live to see any one whom I have loved, tell them I love them still.'

'So she went down the steps, carrying her missal, and, entering the dark passage, was lost to sight. Nothing to be seen of her any more in this life save the missal she held ; and on one leaf, which opened easiest to the hand as being the most used, there was an illumination in red, which the patient monk, who had done the beautiful work, had never contemplated . . . a broad red stain across the lilies and the ivy leaves.'

Only this and her good works, and her gentle memory, acting as an ennobling influence on all she had loved and suffered for, and on all who read this story of a life of abnegation and love, with its fitting ending of a calm and silent death.

How can we end better than with the words which that other martyr in this story, the noble Father Martin, chanted as he, too, went to his death :—

'And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them and be their God ; and God shall wipe all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away.'

John Halifax, Gentleman.

JOHN HALIFAX.

By Mrs. CRAIK.

' John Halifax, Gentleman, is simply the history of a poor young clerk, who rises to be a wealthy mill-owner in the manufacturing districts in the early part of this century. But he contrives to be an heroic and ideal clerk, an heroic and ideal mill-owner ; and that without doing anything which the world would call heroic or ideal, or in any wise stepping out of his sphere, minding simply his own business, and doing the duty which lies nearest him. And how ? By getting into his head the strangest notion, that in whatever station or business he may be, he can always be what he considers a gentleman ; and that if he only behaves like a gentleman, all must go right at last. A beautiful book. As I said before, somewhat of an heroic and ideal book.'

CHARLES KINGSLEY.

John Halifax, Gentleman.

*'And thus he bore without abuse
The grand old name of Gentleman.'*

IN MEMORIAM.

THESE lines appear on the title-page of *John Halifax*, suggesting a question which we of the present day especially must often ask ourselves. For now that the words *Gentleman* and *Lady*, and even, though less commonly, *Gentlewoman*, are so freely applied that to withhold them is almost an insult, and they must needs be at times 'soiled with all ignoble use,' it must be well for us to pause and ask ourselves whether these words have indeed any distinctive meaning whatever, and distinguish any kind of person from any other kind of person. For few people nowadays would, I suppose, define a gentleman as a man who wears a good coat or drives a fine carriage—the man whom Carlyle throughout his writings delights to call a Gigman, according to the definition given once in a law court of 'a very respectable person.'

The author of *John Halifax* answers this question by painting for us with consummate skill and delicacy the portrait of a gentleman; and it is well worth while not merely to skim the book hastily, but to study it with care, seeing how, while circumstances help to

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mould the man, yet he also meets and conquers circumstances, and so comes out of sorrow and joy alike, more noble and more perfectly *gentle* in spirit, as one set of circumstances changes like a dissolving view into another set. For our author has not painted a man absolutely perfect. In our poor human nature, virtues even may be exaggerated into faults. Good nature tends to pass over into a weak yielding to evil, thrift into avarice, diligence into a soul-deadening drudgery for ruin, and high purpose into ambition—by that sin fell the angels. The noblest and best qualities need to be trained and restrained by the grace of God to perfect service by the building up, not of one or two characteristics merely, but of the whole character into the image of Christ, which is the image also of the perfect gentleman.

In John Halifax we see this gradual tempering and refining of a nature strong in candour and honesty, courage and self-respect ; a strong nature, yet one in which, under the sterner qualities, lay a depth of tenderness that, under evil influence, might have been his bane, but that became, by God's grace, his blessing.

John Halifax knows little of his parentage. Only on the fly-leaf of his one treasure—a tiny Greek Testament—were written the dates on which Guy Halifax, Gentleman, was wedded and died. Our author, while showing how men may raise themselves, would yet not have us despise gentle birth. It is a good thing to be gently born, because heredity does

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something for us in good things as well as in evil, and because, just as the son of a drunkard will probably have one special temptation to fight, so the child of parents who have thought pure thoughts and done gracious acts may hope to inherit something of the nobler spirit to which they attained before him. Of his birth, then, John Halifax is neither vain nor ashamed; it is to him something to be thankful for, as a man may and should be thankful for strength of limb, or speed of foot, or any other birthgift of God.

When we see him first, however, it is as a pinched and hungry-looking lad, in clothing worn but clean, who is glad to earn a few pence by wheeling home the invalid carriage of the lame and weakly Phineas Fletcher, the narrator of the story. A shower of rain has come on while Abel Fletcher, the stern yet not unloveable father of Phineas, was taking his son for an airing, and the busy man must hasten back to business. Alas! how great a trial to Abel Fletcher was the weakness of his only child, Phineas knew but too well. There is a quiet strength about the boy John Halifax which even in this first interview draws Phineas to him even as, long ago, the gentle soul of Jonathan was drawn to that of David, in whom, while but a boy, the God of Israel saw the qualities needed for a ruler of His people. These two are David and Jonathan to their lives' end. And while they wait together for the rain to cease we have a glimpse of another young spirit: a little scene is

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acted which turns out later to be one of those 'trifles' which shape the course of human lives.

At the nursery window of the mayor's good, solid, provincial town-house opposite, rosy little faces are peeping, smiling with amusement at the predicament of the two boys, while within are heard pleasant sounds of preparation for dinner. Presently among the others appears the face of another child, whom Phineas knows to be only a visitor. After looking a moment she disappears, and then suddenly the hall door opens and the little girl appears at it, followed by a loudly protesting nurse. In one hand is a loaf, in the other a knife. She cuts a slice of bread and cries, 'Take it, poor boy! you look so hungry!' and then, as the nurse drags her in, she throws the slice towards John Halifax, and both boys start, for the door closes upon a sharp cry.

By degrees John Halifax wins his way into the esteem—after long years into the love—of Abel Fletcher, the hard, upright, narrow-souled, but just and excellent man. The cart of reeking hides which he must at first drive, and the unpleasant circumstances of the tanyard, revolt the son of 'Guy Halifax, Gentleman.' But while he admits the loathing, he knows himself able to strive against and conquer it; so that in all things he is found faithful, and his master advances him step by step, praising him now and again with grave praise, solemn as the reproofs which he is never slow to administer when duty seems to

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require it. Meantime, the friendship between the two lads grows with their growth, till a sudden stop is put to it by the old Quaker's stern command. The two have been into a theatre, have seen—no worse sight—Mrs. Siddons as Lady Macbeth, and John takes upon himself the blame, if blame must be, of the adventure. And Fletcher speaks no angry words, but his cold 'I have been mistaken in thee' smites John Halifax more sharply than any reproaches could have done, and though his stern sense of justice forbids him to dismiss the lad from his business, since in that he has never proved himself unworthy, yet a companion to Phineas he shall no longer be.

Thus two lonely years for Phineas pass, and then comes 1820, the *dear year* when England was filled with horror; for war, famine, and tumult came stalking hand in hand, and none could stay them, when July found the quartern loaf at the famine price of nearly three shillings, and meal four shillings a-peck. The scene of the story is laid in Gloucestershire, and the Bristol bread riots are matter of history. The ferocious attack on Abel Fletcher's mill, and the calm courage and tact of young John Halifax's conduct, form an episode of most thrilling interest.

Once more 'David and Jonathan' are permitted to enjoy the old happy intercourse, and since the excitement of the riots has made Phineas ill, the two go away together to country lodgings at 'Enderley,' by which perhaps is intended Amberley, a most lovely

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spot in the midst of the lovely scenery of the Cotswold Hills. And here it is that the fate which Phineas has already begun to anticipate—not without dread—for his friend comes upon John Halifax. The glimmer of a grey silk gown, glimpses of a slender but stately girl figure, lastly acquaintance with Ursula March, and some services which the young man can render to the solitary girl, whose long-ailing father rapidly fades and dies. Then the sight of a long purple scar on the slender wrist, and the discovery that the wound was received on the day long ago when *she* struggled, knife in hand, with her nurse, to give a bit of bread to a certain ‘poor hungry boy.’

There is nothing in all the story in which we more strongly feel John Halifax to be the true gentleman than his relations with Ursula March, the exquisite tenderness and delicacy and self-restraint of his every thought, word, and deed. Happy the woman to whom it is given to be loved *thus*! And happily Ursula is worthy of such love. But before she leaves Enderley John has something to tell her; not the happy secret of his love, no, but the fact that as the world esteems such things he is not her equal, she is a lady, he is—a *tradesman*, making no mention now of ‘Guy Halifax, Gentleman.’

So they part, but fate does not sunder them to a great distance. Ursula March is coming to Norton Bury, to the house of her cousin and trustee, Squire Brithwood, of the Mythe. And now we have a portrait which we may set beside that of John Halifax,

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and look ‘upon this picture and on this,’ the portrait of the gentleman in birth, the churl in spirit, of whom the poet’s words are entirely true :—

‘The churl in spirit, howe’er he veil
His want in forms for fashion’s sake,
Will let his coltish nature break
At seasons through the gilded pale :

For who can always act ?’

And Richard Brithwood gratuitously insults John Halifax at an evening party to which he and Phineas have been invited by Lady Caroline Brithwood’s special request, offers him money for the service rendered many years before, when John Halifax saved the Squire and Ursula March’s father from drowning in an *eger* on the Severn. In this scene one man disgraces himself, but that man is not John Halifax ; for, as Ursula bravely declares before all the assembly, ‘no insult offered to a man can ever degrade him, the only real degradation is when he degrades himself.’

Ursula leaves her cousin’s house and comes to live with her old governess, the wife of Dr. Jessop. But John Halifax made no attempt to force himself upon her notice. Not only is she in the world’s judgment above him, she is an heiress also. It is left to Phineas, the faithful friend, to bring them together at last, when John finally breaks down under the severity of his self-restraint and becomes seriously ill, poor Phineas feeling as he does so that his friend will

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never be quite the same again to him. But after long years Phineas can happily declare that the friendship, if not quite the same in kind, is no less in strength, and from the day when Abel Fletcher goes to his reward in peace, the home of John and Ursula is his home ; he is brother Phineas to them, Uncle Phineas to the children.

We have now the record of a beautiful family life begun in poverty that was not sordid, because bravely met, but was real, for Richard Brithwood withholds Ursula's fortune for some years, and only gives it up at last when Lord Luxmore, Lady Caroline's father, interferes for purposes of his own, because he wants John Halifax to be useful to him in politics. How bravely and yet how courteously John conducts himself in this matter of the rotten 'pocket borough' the story records, John among the county magnates and the working folk alike showing at once the dignity and courtesy of a true gentleman.

Now John Halifax grows year by year in wealth and influence, and the spiteful attempt of his enemy to ruin him by diverting the stream which turns his cloth mill is changed into a blessing, for he meets need by applying the new and wonderful motive power—steam.

Serious riots have in many places followed the introduction of this new force ; 'a devil,' as it seemed to the uneducated minds, to whom all that is new is matter for suspicion. But there was no riot at John Halifax's mill, because his men both loved and re-

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spected him. Christian tact and Christian firmness ever went hand in hand in his dealings with them, and it may be worth while to chronicle in his wife's words his simple recipe for making his men feel him friend as well as master: 'To pay attention and consideration to all they say, and always to take care and remember to call them by their right Christian names.' A little matter this last seems, but what a depth of meaning there is in it!

With growing wealth comes to John Halifax the thought of growing duty. Very beautiful is the episode of the self-denial which induces husband and wife to move from 'happy little Longfield' to Beechwood Hall. Not for the sake of a place in the county society, for what might have been ambition in John has, by the grace of God, become perception of the highest duty and faithfulness in fulfilling it. The eager cry of the eldest son that they will found a family and make an honoured name is met by the gentle reproof that there is one Name only which men should live to glorify, and that the only founding of a family for which the father hopes is that he may be able to say, 'As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.'

One tender memory remains at Longfield. There sleeps one child—one sweetest faded snowdrop flower, born in winter snows, born to blindness of the outward eyes, but also to utter peace of spirit; the child whom Abel Fletcher solemnly blessed in dying, and who *was* blessed—Muriel Joy Halifax.

John Halifax, Gentleman.

For the other children, cares on their account must needs come into the prosperous and honoured life of John Halifax. As he ruled his workpeople, so he ruled his household—tenderly, but firmly, too—checking with no weak ‘Nay, my sons,’ when checking is needed. Rather than that his Maud, the one daughter left to him, should wed an unworthy suitor, rather than give her to a life of high position but to a husband whom he does not trust, John would see her heart break, would bear even the pang that wrung that tender heart of his when Muriel was laid to rest. So his wise and tender training bears good fruit, and his children are the glory of his old age.

So much I have told of the story of John Halifax, but this is little, for, apart from the exquisite ‘character-study,’ the story is interesting, and in parts even most exciting. If so much as has here been written will tempt readers to get the book for themselves, most surely they will not be disappointed.

Some who read these lines may have seen in the New Gallery Exhibition of a recent year, the portrait of an old lady in whose face sweetness and strength were wonderfully blended. That was the portrait of Dinah Muloch (Mrs. Craik), who is remembered by much good literary work, but by nothing better than this book—good not only to amuse a leisure hour, but to cheer the heart for the work and trials of life—the story of *John Halifax, Gentleman*.

Hilda.

TRANSFORMATION.

By NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE.

*O fair ! O purest ! be thou the dove
That flies alone to some sunny grove,
And lives unseen and bathes her wing,
All vestal white, in the limpid spring.
There, if the hovering hawk be near,
That limpid spring, in its mirror clear,
Reflects him ere he can reach his prey,
And warns the timorous bird away.*

*O be like this dove !
O fair ! O purest ! be like this dove !*

T. MOORE.

Hilda.

'Hawthorne exactly hits the point when he calls Transformation a moonshiny romance.'

COURTNEY—*'Studies New and Old.'*

HAWTHORNE'S *Transformation* is a book by no means of an ephemeral kind, either for the sake of its beauty or its depth. It is at once a poetic sketch of Rome as she was in the days of the Second French Empire, so that *Corinne* and *Transformation* are the great handbooks of modern, not present, Rome; and it is also a study on the effects of evil, and how repentance of a sin may form a conscience and raise a character.

Hilda is the character of the tale, who stands aloof from evil. She is an American maiden, gifted with talents for art, who has come to Rome to study, and, with the freedom of American habits and artist life, dwells alone in a tall old tower, in a chamber high aloft, the tenure of which is to keep a lamp, in honour of the Blessed Virgin, continually alight, and though strong in her anti-Roman opinions, and holding with her Puritan ancestry, she enjoys paying this homage to the pure being in whom womanhood was ennobled; and, as an appropriate setting, her tower is haunted by a flock of white doves, who flutter round her, sit on her shoulder, and feed from her hand.

Hilda.

In contrast with Hilda is her friend Miriam, a beautiful woman with a mysterious past ; and whereas Hilda prefers not to attempt originality, but to copy, study, and interpret, by her wonderful spiritual intuition and exquisite work, the higher meanings of the greatest sacred painters, Miriam seems able to produce nothing that does not finally wear a sad and even mocking expression.

The character who is really the central one of the book is Donatello. There was a belief in the old heathen times of Greece in creatures who combined in themselves the man and the beast, some repulsive, some beautiful, who haunted the woods and glades, and were represented in sculpture as fauns and satyrs. The most noted of these figures is an exceedingly beautiful statue at Rome, known as the Faun of Praxiteles, which bears nothing of the beast-form except that the ears are prolonged into points, and the whole countenance, though far from dull and full of good nature and brightness, has no more expression or soul than the aspect of a free and joyous animal.

Now, to the society in which Hilda lives there joins himself a young Italian count, Donatello, of a mountain family who are reported to be descendants from a Faun, and the youth himself seems to have the undeveloped soul, and the joyous affinity with nature, of a semi-animal. He is a delightful being, full of life and mirth, able to gather birds around at his summons, dancing with exquisite frolic, but unable to think or apply himself, and there are reports that his fore-

Hilda.

fathers always became ferocious in their latter years. Moreover, he never will let his ears be looked at beneath his thick curls.

Donatello follows Miriam much as a faithful dog might do, with the same entire and instinctive affection, and when he sees her followed about and persecuted by a mysterious enemy for whom she evidently feels a horror and aversion, the same instinct of defence and protection as the dog might feel is aroused, and he hurls the wretch down the Tarpeian Rock.

The only witness to the deed, herself all unseen, is the gentle Hilda. To her soul the perception is not only a frightful one, but the first revelation of the depth of sin, as though an abyss had suddenly opened before her. For though the act was Donatello's, all unprompted, Miriam's face of hatred, and then of relief and even triumph, could not be forgotten, and made her a partner to the deed in her own conscience as well as in Hilda's mind.

Hilda remains, sleepless, as though paralysed with horror, in her tower all night, and by-and-by is visited by Miriam. There is an unspoken understanding of the barrier between them. Hilda is cold and still, with the crystal-like hardness of innocence towards guilt beyond the pale of sympathy; and Miriam feels the judgment and does not try to soften her, but goes away, committing to her charge a packet to be delivered at a certain place in four months' time if she herself has not been heard of.

Hilda.

Then Hilda is left alone with her dreadful secret pressing on her, and taking from her all the joy of life.

The story then carries us to Donatello's tower to trace the way in which the weight and consciousness of his crime work upon him. Nothing is more touching and beautiful than the scene where he finds that he has lost his perfect relations with the wild, innocent things of nature, and that the birds and woodland creatures which used to gather round him at his call now shrink away from him. Remorse turns to devotion and repentance, and the soul begins to be developed. Miriam joins him again, for it is to be understood that her stronger and fuller nature is needed to aid him in the struggle. It is then made known that Miriam, half Italian, half English, had been married when a mere child to a man of evil and vicious nature, who had forced her into participation in some horrible crime, which is never revealed, and of which she feels the involuntary guilt. This had separated them, as she hoped never to meet again, but the man had suddenly come on her in the catacombs, dogged her steps like an evil spirit, and always with some fiendish suggestion. But, though Donatello's hand had freed her, it is not for joy and bliss. One or two flashes are allowed us while he is gathering strength for his resolve, and a graver, fuller happiness—that of pardoned sin—is reflected in his countenance, ere finally, as we are given to understand, he completes his expiation by giving himself up to justice.

Hilda.

Meantime Hilda had remained at Rome, restless and unhappy under her secret, unable to apply herself to her art, or to study the saintly countenances that once had breathed peace on her, but wandering from church to church, trying to find rest in the sacred atmosphere. At last, in St. Peter's Church, the impulse of sharing her burden and pouring out her grief is so strong that she kneels down in a confessional, and tells her whole history to one who proves to be an American priest—a kind old man—who comes forth to speak to her face to face, and to tell her that as she was not of his Church, there was no seal of the confessional upon her avowal, but that she need not fear him; and, indeed, that he believed that the fact was already known to the authorities. She is soothed and refreshed, and the weight is taken from her heart, but she remembers Miriam's charge, and the appointed time being come, she sets off to deliver the packet. From that time she vanishes, her tower is empty, but her desk has gone from it. She finally reappears, placed on a balcony in the midst of the carnival. We are not told, but we infer that she had been subjected to an examination upon the confession that Miriam's letter contained, and, likewise, that attempts had been made to win her to the Romish Church, and these not succeeding, she is set free in all her sweet purity and constancy to return to her lamp and her doves. We are told that she rewards the affection of the sculptor who has been the friend of Donatello and her lover

Hilda.

throughout. On Hilda's wedding day a precious gift from Miriam is laid on her table, but the fate of Miriam is left a mystery, and as to Donatello, we are only told that Hilda's hopeful spirit saw sunlight on the mountain side.

It is a wonderful book, and leaves the thought on our minds whether the great mystery of Evil, Redemption, and Repentance be meant to work out the highest development of human nature. Hilda shrinks from the idea, but it remains as a question.

Nathaniel Hawthorne's style is one of great beauty and vividness, and there are exquisite thoughts scattered through the book. Thus the author says of Hilda becoming a copyist :—

‘It strikes us that there is something far higher and nobler in all this, in her thus sacrificing herself to the devout recognition of the highest excellence in art, than there would have been in cultivating her not inconsiderable share of talent for the production of works from her own ideas. She might have set up for herself and won no ignoble name ; she might have helped to fill the already crowded and encumbered world with pictures not destitute of merit, but falling short, if but by ever so little, of the best that has been done ; she might thus have gratified some tastes that were incapable of appreciating Raphael. But this could be done only by lowering the standard of art to the comprehension of the spectator. She chose the better and loftier and more unselfish part, laying her individual hopes, her fame, her prospects of enduring remembrance, at the feet of those great departed ones whom she so loved and venerated ; and therefore the world was the richer for this feeble girl.’

We have chosen this extract because it so well shows woman's mission of being an interpreter.

Mara : the Pearl.

THE PEARL OF ORR'S ISLAND.

By Mrs. BEECHER STOWE.

*'Many the gems of the Church that she hath in eternal remembrance,
Jewels of silver and jewels of gold, her virgins and martyrs.
Each hath the pearl in their hand, which the Prince in His love
hath prepared them,
Each hath the pearl you may bring, and the Prince in His love
will accept it.'*

J. M. NEALE.

Mara.

'There are, both of men and women, beings born into this world in whom from childhood the spiritual and the reflective predominate over the physical. . . . They are the artists, the poets, the unconscious seers, to whom the purer truths of spiritual instruction are open. . . . Multitudes of them pass away in earlier years, and leave behind in many hearts the anxious wonder, why they came so fair, only to mock the love they kindled. They who live to maturity are the priests and priestesses of the spiritual life, ordained of God to keep the balance between the rude but absolute necessities of physical life and the higher sphere to which that must at length give place.'—H. B. STOWE.

THE rare and exquisite personality which Mrs. Beecher Stowe has created for us in Mara Lincoln is less familiar to the general reader than many of the other characters drawn by the same hand, because for some unaccountable reason *The Pearl of Orr's Island* appears to be so much less known amongst us than her other writings.

Uncle Tom's Cabin and *Dred* are, as everybody knows, not mere books of fiction, but works of great national importance, written from the heart's depths, in the service of the great cause to which Mrs. Stowe devoted her life; but we do not think that for grace of style, power of word-painting, and a certain delicate

Mara: the Pearl.

mingling of humour and pathos, never exaggerated, but always kept within the limits of true art, the story of the *Pearl* has ever been surpassed, even by the great American authoress herself.

When we speak of Mara's personality, we use the term advisedly, for, unlike some other characters, hers was expressed in that outward form which enshrined the soul within.

The offspring of a grave, pure-minded mother and a manly father—born in sorrow and baptized in tears—the orphaned child grows up before us, in the pages of this charming story, from infancy to womanhood, watched over by her grandparents, the old fisherman and his wife, as she plays about the quaint brown house on Orr's Island, and lights up the little kitchen with her pretty presence—a slender child—'small of stature, beyond the wont of children of her age, and moulded with a fine waxen delicacy that won admiration from all eyes. Her hair curly and golden, but her eyes dark like her mother's, and the lids drooping over them in that manner which gives a peculiar expression of dreamy wistfulness.' Quite out of character, it would seem at first, with the homely surroundings in which her lot is cast, only that all who knew her loved her—and love, true and real, even under the roughest exterior, can harmonise all things to itself.

But the little Mara, even at this stage of her history, was no inanimate doll to be disposed of at the will of

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another. From her earliest years she displayed that strength of character which co-existed with, and formed so remarkable a contrast to, the gentleness of her nature. One of the most characteristic and humorous scenes in the whole book is that in which the tiny 'Pearl' objects with all her might to the excellent intentions of 'Mis' Kitteridge,' who desires to replace the 'pitty boo dress and *pitty* shoes' in which Mara is sent to visit her with a suit of her own Sally's work-a-day clothes to play about in on the shore, and failing this, to cover them with a 'checked apron' to preserve them from damage. The intensity of decision with which the almost baby insists on wearing her best for ordinary use, and revolts from the touch of anything 'common or unclean,' is not only comic, but symbolical of her whole future life. All her days Mara loved the dainty and the beautiful, and made them part of her home surroundings—crammed the old-fashioned cottage with the wild flowers that were so like herself in their fragile beauty and sweet approachableness; strove, self-taught, to paint their colours from nature; worshipped the sea that encircled her island home, and the golden clouds, and the mysteries of the silent forest, and communed as much with nature as with the friends around her whom she loved so dearly.

All her days, too, Mara would work at one object with an infinite pertinacity, until she attained to it. 'How long you do think about things!' said Moses,

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her boy-companion, to her once, with true masculine impatience, and this accusation exactly expressed the chief quality of her soul.

‘When an idea was presented to her, she carefully folded it up and laid it away on the inner shelves of her mind, till she could think more about it. Pliable as she was to all outward appearances, the child had her own still, interior world, where all her little notions and opinions stood up crisp and fresh, like flowers that grow in cool, shady places. If anybody too rudely assailed a thought or suggestion she put forth, she drew it back again into this quiet inner chamber, and went on. There are some women of this habit; and there is no independence and pertinacity of opinion like that of those seemingly soft, quiet creatures, whom it is so easy to silence and so difficult to convince. Mara, little and unformed as she yet was, belonged to the race of those spirits to whom is deputed the office of the angel in the Apocalypse, to whom was given the golden rod which measured the New Jerusalem. Infant though she was, she had ever in her hands that invisible measuring-rod which she was laying to the foundations of all actions and thoughts. There may, perhaps, come a time when the saucy boy who now steps so superbly, and predominates so proudly in virtue of his physical strength and daring, will learn to tremble at the golden measuring-rod held in the hand of a woman.’

And the prediction was fulfilled. The time came when, after many foolish vicissitudes on his part and much silent misery on hers, the liking which had always been between these two as boy and girl play-

Mara: the Pearl.

fellows blossomed out into the true and pure love which can only come once into any life.

But here, again, the strength of Mara's character was felt in the nature of the affection which she bestowed on Moses. Growing up with him from a child in the same home, there was a kind of protecting, almost maternal character in her love, which made it differ from that rush of mutual feeling which generally knits together hearts that God has made for each other. Moses needed her, in fact, more than she needed him. He had been given to her, as it were, out of the mysterious ocean and from the arms of his dead mother; she had been his good angel, unknown to him, at the very turning-point of his career. Even at the risk of her life's peace she must now be his, that she may learn how to lead and influence this daring, wayward boy, who believes in no present God, but only in purity and devotion as he sees them in her eyes, and who reverses the poet's lines so that they read thus:

‘She for God only; he for God in her.’

In the subtle working out of this problem and in the unexpected solution of it, lies the story of *The Pearl of Orr's Island*.

In death instead of life lay the solution, in sorrow instead of joy, in the training of another soul to minister instead of her own to the one only love of Mara's life. Nothing can exceed the delicacy and

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the art with which the character of Mara's friend, the saucy, bewitching Sally Kitteridge, is gradually moulded, as it were, before our eyes, in the closing chapters of the story—moulded and touched and softened simply by her love for Mara, and also, all unconsciously to herself, by the dawning affection for Mara's lover which began at first in thoughtless coquetry, and was so resolutely crushed down in loyalty to her friend, who was then far dearer to her than any lover.

Mara was one of those creatures who never seem to have any mission except just to *be*, and who therefore make pure womanliness so much more lovable than those whose natures are more self-conscious and whose efforts after influence are more apparent; she was always her own gracious and beautiful self—'a creature not too bright and good for human nature's daily food'—yet all her words and thoughts flowed from a heart given up to Christ, full of innocent trust in her Heavenly Father, and also full of love to all around her, and of that faith in human nature which was so well expressed in old Captain Kitteridge's homely words: 'She never said much to me, but she kind o' drew me. . . . She's so kind, good, and innocent, she thinks I'm good—*kind o' takes it for granted I'm one of the Lord's people, ye know. It kind o' makes me want to be, ye know.*' And it was this winning power that wrought the change in Sally, and made her the fit instrument to carry on Mara's work

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when she herself had become only a faithfully treasured memory in the heart of her betrothed.

Day by day, as Mara drooped and faded, we find that

‘Sally Kitteridge was almost a constant inmate of the brown house, ever ready in watching and waiting ; and one only needed to mark the expression of her face to feel that a holy charm was silently working upon her higher and spiritual nature. Those great, dark, sparkling eyes, that once seemed to express only the brightness of animal vivacity, and sparkled like a brook in unsympathetic gaiety, had in them now mysterious depths and tender, fleeting shadows ; and the very tone of her voice had a subdued tremor. The capricious elf, the tricky sprite, was melting away in the immortal soul, and the deep, pathetic power of a noble heart was being born. Some influence sprung of sorrow is necessary always to perfect beauty in womanly nature ; we feel its absence in many whose sparkling wit and high spirits give grace and vivacity to life, but in whom we vainly seek for some spot of quiet tenderness and sympathetic repose. Sally was, ignorantly to herself, changing in the expression of her face and the tone of her character as she ministered in the daily wants which sickness brings in a simple household.’

When we see her again it is as a new being, softened and mellowed by the discipline of suffering—the devoted daughter, the constant, unforgetting friend, the faithful consoler.

And so the pure ‘Pearl’ remained, as always, single and alone in her shining whiteness, ready to be counted amongst the Master’s jewels ; and the tender

Mara : the Pearl.

old fisherman who had guarded her earthly life took comfort from the dream which came to him after she had passed away, and which he thus confided to Miss Roxy, the quaintest of all the living characters that peopled Orr's Island—roughest outside and softest-hearted within.

‘Well, ye see, I thought I was out a-walking up and down, and lookin’ and lookin’ for something I’d lost. What it was I couldn’t quite make out, but my heart felt heavy as if it would break ; and I was lookin’ all up and down the sands by the seashore, and somebody said I was like a merchantman seeking goodly pearls. I said I had lost my pearl—my pearl of great price ; and then I looked up, and far off, on the wet sands, shining softly like the moon, lay my pearl. I thought it was Mara, but it seemed a great pearl, with a soft moonlight in it ; and I was runnin’ for it, when some one said, “Hush !” and I looked and saw Him a-comin’—Jesus of Nazareth—just as He walked by the sea. It was all dark night round Him, but I could see Him by the light that came from His face, and the long hair was hanging down on His shoulders. He came and took up my pearl, and put it on His forehead, and it shone into my heart, and I felt happy ; and He looked at me steadily and lovingly, and rose and rose in the air, and melted into the clouds, and I awoke so happy and so calm. Our pearl is safe.’

Molly Gibson.

WIVES AND DAUGHTERS.

By Mrs. GASKELL.

*'Yet is this girl I sing in naught uncommon,
And very far from angel yet, I trow ;
Her faults, her sweetnesses, are purely human ;
Yet she's more lovable as simple woman
Than any one diviner that I know.'*

Mrs. CRAIK.

Molly Gibson.

'All right doing has its ground in sacrifice.'

IT was a very hard day for Molly Gibson when she heard first that her father meant to marry again. She had had a very happy childhood and early youth. Her father, a doctor in a country town, was a man of culture and refinement, with intellectual tastes, devoted to his child. In those long-ago days, when country people had few interests and fewer changes, those few interests were very strong, and Molly was much loved by the kind ladies of Hollingford. Then, too, the great people at the castle, Lord and Lady Cumnor and their daughter, Lady Harriet, had shown her kindness, and her father's patient, Mrs. Hamley, loved the girl almost as her own child. This lady was a delicate invalid, and it was pleasant to her to have Molly to stay in the quiet old country house, where the rough though loving squire was out all day; and of the two sons, Osborne, the handsome, elegant heir, was rarely there, while Roger was a plain and simple fellow, glad to have a sister-like companion. Molly was an honest, straightforward girl, with fine perceptions and a loving heart—with the promise, too, of beauty to come in her

Molly Gibson.

black-lashed grey eyes and curly black hair ; but a child still at sixteen. When Mr. Gibson came over to Hamley, where Molly was staying, and told her that he was going to marry Mrs. Kirkpatrick, Molly recollected Mrs. Kirkpatrick once when she had spent a day at the Towers, and the recollection was not to her mind. One thought only was attractive. There was a daughter, Cynthia, at school in France, and when she came home Molly would have a companion and sister. The Hamleys were good friends, and they did not encourage Molly in useless regrets, but sent her over to the Towers in the simple white frock, which was so much more becoming than her 'best silk,' to make acquaintance with the new mamma who had once been Lady Harriet's governess, and was still a favourite at the great house. Molly was a good girl, and she went prepared to like and to be liked. This graceful, blue-eyed, soft-voiced lady was charming, but why need she have *told* Molly 'Your papa is *so* fond of you.' Molly had long known that. But she was very kind, and Molly prepared herself to like her.

Molly's story is short and simple. We know that Cynthia came home beautiful, attractive, and mysterious, that Roger Hamley lost his heart to her, and Molly suffered, not so much because she herself was not his choice, as because Cynthia was careless of the prize she had won. Molly was burdened, too, with the knowledge of Osborne Hamley's secret marriage, saddened by the loss of his kind mother, and oppressed by an

Molly Gibson.

uncongenial home. The only event that had happened to her, the only out-of-the-way thing she ever did, was when she secretly met Cynthia's former lover, Mr. Preston, and got from him the letters, which he was making a cruel use of towards the girl whom he had once courted. Molly bore all the blame of this secret interview, bore it willingly for the sake of Cynthia and Roger. And then, while Roger was away, Cynthia turned him off for a nearer and richer suitor, and Molly broke her heart because his heart might be broken. Then at last Roger came home, and we are permitted to hope that his eyes were opened, and that he recognised the worth of Molly's faithful love, and fully returned it.

This is all the story, and we can only study this delicate character by comparing it with others. Molly lived amid the surroundings of Miss Austen's heroines. We know her as well as we know Emma Woodhouse and Elizabeth Bennett; but commonplace surroundings did not make this noble and innocent creature commonplace. Her love-story, so far as it is told, was sad enough, and only too common. Innocently and inevitably, in the first dawn of her womanhood, she gave away her heart to the best man she knew, and her love met with only kind friendship in return. This is the more pathetic because Molly hardly knew that it was pathetic at all. As long as Roger had his heart's desire, she could not be very unhappy; but when Cynthia failed him, then her

Molly Gibson.

spirits and strength gave way. By the effect produced on this charming, perplexing, secretive, but warm-hearted Cynthia by Molly's crystal truthfulness and single-heartedness, we learn to know Molly herself; all her stepmother's wiles and self-deceits and affectations—affectations so ingrain that they were far more natural than sincerity—only serve to show that the girl was honest and candid. She lived among people who flattered and toadied the great ladies, who, on their side, patronised and laughed at them. But Molly could be Lady Harriet's favourite, and still hold her own; she could stand without injury the puzzling flattery of a superior who felt that she could do as she pleased with a favoured *protégée*. She would be a true friend to the handsome, delicate, unhappy Osborne, and treat him with tenderness in which there mixed no touch of foolish sentimentality. She lived in a day when the life of girls of the middle class was simple, effortless, and uninspiring, confined to small duties, and heightened by very small pleasures; and yet she was free from every failing by which such limited lives are marred. No petty jealousy, no small-minded spite, no vulgar gossip spoiled her direct simplicity. It did not occur to her to try to do anything very hard; but she had some very hard things to bear, and she bore them perfectly well.

Thousands of girls have lived, and do live, in little country towns; they are under the sway of uncongenial relations, have hardly any 'interesting' friends, are

Molly Gibson.

subject, perhaps, to annoying misconceptions, have minds capable of more occupation than the course of life allows to them. There are many who, like Molly, find their deepest affections unreturned, and we hope that among them there is a fair proportion who ennoble these common trials by an uncommon absence of common faults.

The story of Molly Gibson's life is so uneventful, and at the same time her character is so fully and delicately described, that only the most careful analysis can do it justice. There is the same minute realism in the picture of daily life as we find in Jane Austen ; but there is, we think, a finer perception and deeper insight. Not only is every shade of conduct and character noted and described, but subtle and tender feelings are discerned, and the atmosphere is no longer that of genteel comedy.

Molly is a younger sister of Fanny Price, whom in some ways she resembles ; but though Fanny was as silent and faithful a lover, she could hardly have been so brave a friend. The situation in which Molly, Roger, and Cynthia are placed recalls slightly that of Edmund Bertram, Fanny Price, and Mary Crawford in *Mansfield Park* ; but it is lifted to a much higher level. Even sweet Anne Elliot, who goes the deepest and rises the highest of Miss Austen's heroines, was made of weaker and narrower stuff. Miss Austen could have described the life of Hollingford ; Osborne and Roger are something the kind of young men who woo her

Molly Gibson.

gentle and sprightly heroines ; but we think that there is nothing in all her delightful volumes equal to the tenderness of the scene where Roger lights his father's pipe, and coaxes the sore-hearted old man into good humour with himself. She could have given us a great deal of Mrs. Gibson ; she would have observed how she rearranged the poor doctor's household, and substituted 'elegant trifles' for his bread and cheese. She would have delighted in showing how she took Molly and Cynthia to the ball, and joined the 'Towers party.' But we are not sure that she would have known that Mrs. Gibson felt that there was an impropriety in talking about your duty on a week-day (when it was inconvenient), and the memory of her early struggles would have been deprived of the tragical touch which makes us tolerate her after all.

We do not think she would have recognised that Cynthia could be at once honest and untruthful, shallow and sincere, or that, while she treated her lovers so badly, and allowed Molly's self-sacrifice in her favour, she, nevertheless, gave her a warm and genuine love. We should hardly have seen Osborne's excuses, and Roger never would have thought it right to keep his secret. The one writer, it seems, took portraits with unerring fidelity ; but the other looks at the life behind the painted faces. This is, perhaps, a bold comparison ; but we do not think that it is possible to study Molly Gibson without feeling that her story shows us that there were lights and shadows, depths and

Molly Gibson.

heights, in that old humdrum, comfortable, restful world, which are levelled by the even, cheerful daylight that guided Jane Austen's pen. And this comparison inevitably suggests that there is a part of Molly's life which we do *not* see. The joys and the sorrows, the peace and the struggle that come from religion, or from the want of it, lie in the quiet background of her life. It is a yet higher degree of insight, a yet nobler intuition, that can see in quiet country circles Dinah Morris and Dorothea Brooke.

'It takes a deal of sorts to make a world,' and 'a deal of sorts' also to describe one. And, on the whole, it does seem that, inclined as we are to think that a past age must be a golden one, the chance of a wider outlook does greatly diminish the risk to character of this old-world small pressure of small things.

Molly had nothing to think of but the few people with whom she lived. Her cargo was all in one ship. Being what she was, there was a finish and perfection about her, perhaps from this very cause; but if she had been a trifle more one-sided, a shade less true, how poor a thing she might have made of life. When there was so little to *be*, it would have made worth of character more possible if there had been a little more to do. When we feel the restlessness and the hurry and the incompleteness of our own day, we are a little inclined to idealise the limitations of that more 'finite and finished' one that is past.

Molly Gibson.

It is not, however, so entirely past as is sometimes supposed, only it has dropped a little in the social scale. Let us remember that circumstances did not make such girls as Molly. It was Molly who conquered circumstance.

Kenelm Chillingly.

KENELM CHILLINGLY.

By LORD LYTTON.

*'Slight is the tale, and simply sad, my soul
Hath woven from some memories deeply stor'd,
Which should not voiceless die !'*

LORD LYTTON.

Kenelm Chillingly.

‘He rideth easily enough whom the grace of God carrieth.’

THE story of *Kenelm Chillingly: his Adventures and Opinions*, by Lord Lytton, is so simple, the plot so slight, that any one who takes up this novel hoping to find exciting adventures in it will be disappointed; but, on the other hand, we know of more than one habitual novel-reader who has cried before reaching the end, and no one can lay this book down without feeling the better for the pictures shown us of an upright country gentleman and his quaint, original son, of a noble woman who bears a secret sorrow bravely and patiently, and of one of the prettiest, most lovable heroines which an author of the male sex has ever drawn.

Sir Peter Chillingly, of Exmundham, was the owner of a good fortune, a large estate, a suitable if not congenial wife; but for eleven years after his marriage no child had blessed the union, and a distant cousin, by name Chillingly Gordon, considered himself the heir. Suddenly his expectations are dashed to the ground by the appearance of the unexpected but much-desired son; and when the baby is brought before a family

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conclave to be inspected, the cousin refuses to kiss the infant, and shows other marks of his disappointment.

One of the baby's aunts remarks: 'What a heavenly mournful expression! it seems grieved to have left the angels;' but the Rev. John Chillingly answers, 'That is prettily said, cousin Sibyl, but the infant must pluck up its courage, and fight its way among mortals with a good heart if it wants to get back to the angels again, and I think it will: a fine child.'

The keynote of the book lies in this sentence, and it is the Rev. John who chooses the baby's name of 'Kenelm,' as the Chillingly family is related to Sir Kenelm Digby, who 'fought as well as he wrote; eccentric, it is true, but always a gentleman.'

Certainly Kenelm takes after his namesake, for he is very eccentric, and yet always a gentleman. The first time he comes back from school he confides to the Rev. John that he has challenged a big bully to fight him again the next half, and, says he, 'unless you can help me to lick him, I shall never be good for anything in the world—never; it will break my heart.' Thereupon Kenelm takes lessons in boxing, but suddenly remembers it is not fair to take this advantage over his enemy without letting the bully know. He accordingly writes a quaint letter to his enemy beginning with, 'Mr. Chillingly presents his compliments to Mr. Butt;' but he receives for answer, 'You are an insolent little fool, and I'll thrash you within an inch of your life.'

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Kenelm goes back to school, licks Butt, and writes to tell this news to his relative, adding this P.S., ‘ Now I have licked Butt, I have made it up with him.’

From this time the boy prospered. He did well at school, at college, and with a private tutor, but something was amiss. There was about him a tranquil indifference which puzzled his friends, and was the despair of his aristocratic mother ; he had no vanity and no ambition, and he looked with disdain upon the pleasures of the world ; in fact, Kenelm had grown up a philosopher.

When he comes of age he makes such a strange speech to the tenants that he startles his parents into settling to send him abroad in order to rouse him, and to make him more like other people. Before starting, Kenelm casually meets a travelling artist and minstrel, and this makes him think he, too, will go and seek for his own amusements in his own way ; so, taking no luggage, and leaving a note behind him for his father, he sets out on his voyage of discovery.

Now follow his adventures, the history of the friends he makes, the village bully he fights, because of this man’s unmanly persecution of a village girl who will not return his mad passion, the reform he effects in the person of this same Tom Bowles, and all the secret kindness he accomplishes : all these are delightfully described. But during all this time Kenelm remains unable to believe in happiness for himself, and he cannot be touched by love, though

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he finds himself involved in the escape of a pretty girl from her guardian. The girl has dressed herself as a boy to seek out a strolling actor whom she had fallen in love with ; but Kenelm, discovering this, shows her how foolish she has been, and then escapes himself from the uncle, who tries to make him marry the young madcap. After a time he is recognised by a family friend, and for a short period returns into ordinary society life whilst staying in the house of this country squire. Cecilia Travers, the daughter of his host, is in every way charming, and before she is aware of it falls in love with Kenelm, but the hero, fearing to be misunderstood, again disappears and resumes his disguise. He once more meets the wandering artist, and by a word in season saves him from making shipwreck of his life ; but all this time Kenelm the philosopher is still callous and heart-whole, nothing excites his love or his ambition.

At last, in a remote village, he meets his fate, and Lily Mordaunt—young, beautiful, childlike, and surrounded with mystery—is the one woman who makes his pulses beat quicker, and who calls forth all that is noblest in his character. His philosophy melts like morning dew, his disbelief in the weaker sex disappears, and he falls desperately in love.

Lily is a tamer of butterflies, a lover of nature, animate and inanimate, a fairy creature, ‘born in May with the flowers,’ as her lover says ; but besides this she possesses a beautiful soul, and, like a tiny pool, is

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capable of reflecting brightest sunshine. This is what she says to Kenelm when they have been talking of a *native* self, deep hid beneath the ordinary self one shows to the world:—

“How true! You have felt that too. Where is that innermost self, so deep down, so deep, yet when it does come forth, so much higher, higher, immeasurably higher than one’s everyday self? It does not tame the butterflies, it longs to get to the stars; and then—and then—ah! how soon it fades back again! You have felt that. Does it puzzle you?”

So the two drift happily and beautifully into love, till suddenly Kenelm discovers that the wandering artist is no other than Lily’s guardian, and that he, to whom she and her aunt owe everything, loves the pure Lily, and that his whole life-long devotion has been made easy by the hopes of some day winning her. Kenelm also discovers the mystery of Lily’s life, which the artist, Mr. Melvill, has sworn never to reveal to her.

Then comes the turning-point. Shall these two lovers be ruled by love or duty? Shall passion, as in so many of our modern books, excuse everything, or shall duty triumph?

We will not disclose the beautiful ending. We want those who have not read *Kenelm Chillingly* to study it for themselves, and see how the young Englishman conquers self, and how in defeat he wins, not, perhaps, what he most wished to gain, but a new

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motive power, which will make the perfect gentleman also the perfect Christian.

The last chapter shows us an ideal picture of a father and son. The father who has patiently waited for the early promise to be fulfilled, and trusted his boy all through, and the son who has trusted and loved his father so much that at last he is able to offer him his best powers and all his future in return for all his past trust. With 'his whole aspect eloquent with a resolute enthusiasm too grave to be the flash of a passing moment,' he says,—

“Aye, aye, Victory or Westminster Abbey. The world is a battlefield, in which the worst wounded are the deserters. . . . My choice is made, not that of deserter, that of soldier in the ranks.”

And at the end we are allowed to see, though it is not said in so many words, that Kenelm does rise to victory, and that in the future joy as well as glory comes to him; but he must always have remained a delightful, quaint, original philosopher, as well as a perfect English gentleman.

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